

110



CHILDREN'S BOOK
COLLECTION



LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

CHUN AND SI-LING,

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

CHUN AND SI-LING

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE

CHUN AND SI-LING,

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE;

IN WHICH IS INTRODUCED SOME ACCOUNT OF THE
CUSTOMS, MANNERS, AND MORAL CONDUCT
OF THE

CHINESE:

DESIGNED FOR THE
INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT OF YOUTH.

“To regulate the manners, we should be skilled in governing the heart, and especially in becoming masters of the four principal passions—*Joy, Sadness, Anger, and Fear.*”

CONFUCIUS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR; AND SOLD BY J. RICHARDSON,
ROYAL EXCHANGE, AND J. HATCHARD, PICCADILLY.

1811.

CHUN AND SI-LING

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE

IN WHICH IS ENTERED SOME ACCOUNT OF THE

CUSTOMS, MANNERS, AND MORAL CONDUCT

OF THE

CHINESE

DESIGNED FOR THE

INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT OF YOUTH.

"To rectify the manners, we should be skilled in
governing the heart; and especially in becoming acquainted
with the four principal passions—Love, Hatred, Anger, and Fear."
CONFUCIUS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR: AND SOLD BY J. RICHARDSON,

NO. 4. ST. PAULS CHURCH-YARD, LONDON.

Printed at the Free-School,
Gower's Walk, Whitechapel,

1811

INTRODUCTION.

READING a history of China some years ago, I met with the character of a young Chinese which interested my mind in such a manner that ever after, when labouring under any depression of spirits, or obliged to encounter any difficulties, I placed Chun before my fancy's eye, and asked myself how he would have acted under similar circumstances?

The more hard I found it to check a rising inclination to retaliate any supposed injuries, the more I revered the exemplary conduct of Chun, until I became so enamoured of his character,

INTRODUCTION.

that I eagerly perused every thing relating to China, in hopes of learning something more of the personage whom I had so long been accustomed to venerate. As this acquaintance (if I may so call him) certainly, on many trying occasions, calmed my mind, and contributed in no small degree to infuse happiness into it, I have long wished to introduce him to the juvenile world; but, knowing that morality must be gaily dressed to appear attractive to youth, I have worked up the history of Chun and Si-ling in the form of a species of romance; and, if my little work should eventually make one convert to reflection, or teach my readers how to acquire and maintain equanimity of soul, my warmest wish will be gratified.

CHUN AND SI-LING,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

“**H**AIL to the city of Han-tchong-fou,
“ in the province of Chen-si, in the vast
“ empire of China! Hail to every preg-
“ nant woman within this city! and
“ hail to the opening year! for on your
“ grandest festival, yea, on the *Feast*
“ of *Lanthorns**, shall a son be born

* The beginning of the year is the Feast of Lanthorns. All business is suspended; they make presents, and visit their superiors. These lanthorns are very great; some are composed of six panes; the frame is made of japanned wood, adorned with gilding; the squares are made of fine trans-

“ within this city, who shall immortalize his parents, and the place that gave him birth: for since the sun first shone on man there was not such a gracious creature known!”

These words were uttered by a strange man, more strangely clad. Crouds of people thronged about him, parent horn, on which is painted figures, trees, and flowers; some are of a blue colour, and extremely handsome. They put in these lanthorns several lamps and a great number of candles, whose light makes the figures look very lively. The top of this machine is crowned with various carved works, from whence hang streamers of divers colours. Some of them represent spectacles to amuse the people: you see horses galloping, ships sailing, armies marching, dancing, &c. people who lie concealed, by imperceptible threads put the figures in motion; others carry a dragon full of lights from head to tail, sixty or eighty feet long, which makes the same turnings and windings as a serpent.

and those who could get near enough to see his face, declared he had a countenance seraphic, and eyes of azure blue, for which reason all inferred that he must be of heavenly extraction.

Every body wished to feast this curious stranger, but he refused to enter any dwelling, or to take refreshment. This strengthened their idea of his divinity; and, when he left the city, they retired to the chambers of their wives to ponder on his words. Every mother prayed she might bring forth a son upon that day, and pregnant women came from every quarter to be delivered in that city, in hopes that her's might be the glorious child. That produced by Yan-fo, the wife of Lan-tse, was by all allowed to be the most angelic, and his fond parents rejoiced in the prophecy. As he grew, it was

perceived that he was blessed with a most wonderful capacity. They procured for him the best masters, and his amiable disposition greatly endeared him to them; but ere he had attained his thirteenth year a dreadful malady assailed him, which entirely deprived him of his beauty; and, cruel and unnatural as it may seem, the loss of beauty deprived him of his parents' love; and the child, who had been nurtured with such tender care, was driven out before his limbs had gained sufficient strength to support his more enfeebled body, to brave "the pelting of the pitiless storm," and tend upon his father's cattle!

At first this treatment benumbed his sense of duty, and he almost despised the authors of his being; but the new world of beauties which now opened on him, so unlike to any thing

that he had seen in the apartments of his mother, diverted his young mind, and turned his thoughts to the great Author of all.

He would sit whole hours watching the thunder, lightning, and the rain, and then fall down upon his knees, and worship Him who lives above the clouds. Every insect, every flower, filled his mind with wonder, and his heart with gratitude, and he would patiently submit to the unkindness of his parents, return unto his little shed, and feast his mind upon the beauties of creation.

They now would have deprived him of all instruction, but that the Mandarin of Letters, who had been his master, and who loved him with an affection almost paternal, declared he would complain of them to the great Emperor: they therefore suffered him to accom-

pany his brothers to the public school; but when the lessons of the day were over, he was compelled to seek the solitary shed, where his only refreshment was a little boiled rice, a few pot-herbs, and a cup of cold tea, although his family were feeding upon every dainty. Before he began his humble meal, he would sink upon his knees, and, with his expressive eyes fixed on the clouds, implore a blessing from him who fertilized the earth; whilst the only complaint that ever passed his lips was this—"Oh, my mother! why will you
" not suffer me to love you as you used
" to do? My poor heart pants for some
" one to whom it might with safety
" speak its feelings; but my mother!
" she loaths the sight of him whom
" once she nourished on her bosom.
" True, I am sadly altered, but what I

“ want in beauty, I will make up in
 “ love and industry.”

After shedding a copious flood of tears, he hastily arose, saying—“ It may
 “ be for the best; for, did my mother
 “ feel for me only one half the love
 “ that burns within my breast towards
 “ her, I should perhaps forget there
 “ was an higher Being, and worship
 “ her alone.”

The father of Chun was about this time found guilty of some mal-practices, for which his property was confiscated, and himself and family forced to seek shelter in another province. This miserable man, whose temper was fretful and irritable in his most prosperous days, could not bear up against this disgrace, was seized with a violent illness that appeared to be incurable. His wife rent her hair, and his favourite children up-

braided him with his crimes, and the loss of their honour and property.

Poor Chun, whose inmost soul was pained to see his family in this affliction, ran about the town to get himself a service; and, meeting with a man whose countenance he thought benevolent, he thus addressed him:—

“ Most reverend sir—if you have a
 “ father, pity mine—if you have a son,
 “ think what would be his sufferings,
 “ should he behold you branded with
 “ infamy, oppressed with sickness, and
 “ wanting even a pillow on which to rest
 “ your aching head! Oh, sir! give me
 “ but the means to save my wretched
 “ father, and I will be your slave for
 “ twice the term of seven years.”

The Mandarin was so struck with his energetic manner, that he presented

him with twenty leangs*, and marked him for his slave, allowing him to pass the nights with his sick father till he should recover.

Chun embraced the feet of his new master, then, purchasing a quantity of ginseng, hastened to administer it unto his father. Soon as the sun arose he sought the mansion of his master, signed his bond of slavery, and set about his labourious employment, with a heart depressed by nothing but the misfortunes of his parents; and, when the sun retired behind the hills, he retired to the wretched hovel of his father, that he might watch the changes of his pulse, administer the medicines, and assist his mother in painting fans, and making works of straw, the sale of

* A leang, or tael, is a Chinese crown: its value is about 8s. 4d.

which procured provisions for herself and her two other sons.

One would have thought this duteous conduct must have warmed their hearts with love towards him ; but they could scarcely treat him with civility, whilst he was labouring for their support ; and whenever he would try to reconcile his brothers, they instantly would fall on him, and make it seem that he was the aggressor.

The Chinese (even to this day) worship gods of various denominations : these they invoke to assist them according to their supposed abilities, and if their prayers succeed, they will new gild and beautify the god, and place it in the most conspicuous part of the house : but if their prayers fail, they whip it for its inattention to their happiness, dash

it to pieces, or drag it through the puddles until it is without form.

Chun's mother had been praying for eleven weeks to a most horrid-looking, cross-legged figure, which she called the *god of health*. Now that her husband was recovered, she thought it but her duty to re-gild it, and bring it to his chamber, that her whole family might fall prostrate upon the earth, and do it homage.

Chun was so shocked at this impious proceeding, that, for the first time in his whole life, he had the courage to remonstrate with his mother.—

“How is it possible,” said he, “that
“this great lump of clay, which can be
“moulded into any form, should have
“had power to bring my father back
“even from the verge of death? No! it
“is the God who formed my heart, and

“made it feel such various emotions—
“it is He who lives beyond the clouds,
“the brightness of whose majesty would
“dazzle and eclipse our feeble sight;
“it is He who has restored my honoured
“father, and to him I pray.” He then
raised his eyes and hands towards heaven, and uttered a short thanksgiving. The family were all confounded; which he, mistaking for conviction, mildly continued—“How could my mother for
“one moment think that ghastly lump
“could help her? Was I to dash it on
“the ground, could it save itself from
“crumbling into atoms? Should I snap
“off one arm, could it avenge itself
“with the other?” As he said the word he did the deed. This roused them from their stupor: the father gave a signal which the sons understood, and instantly threw Chun upon the ground,

making fast his hands and feet, whilst the father applied, with all his renovated strength, the bastinado* to the back of his exemplary son!

This cruel treatment deprived the unhappy youth of reason for some months, and had it not been that his master possessed more feeling than his parents, here would have ended his afflictions and his life. In his delirium he talked of many things which his humility would not have suffered him to mention in his reasonable moments. Amongst other wonderful discoveries

* The instrument which inflicts the bastinado is a thick cane, cloven in two, and several feet long; the lower end is as broad as one's hand, and the upper is smooth and small, that it may be more easily managed: it is made of bamboo, which is a wood that is hard and heavy.

which he had made, and which he then related to his master, he said there would be a great eclipse of the sun on such a day, at eight o'clock in the morning, in the constellation Fang, (Scorpio.)

This actually happened as predicted by Chun, which raised him in the estimation of his master, who felt the liveliest joy at his recovery, and, although he could not find the heart to give liberty to one whom he had found so trust-worthy, he yet determined to make his slavery supportable, by building him a comfortable dwelling, and giving him a piece of land, the produce of which he might appropriate to any purpose he should think proper.

Chun now thought himself as happy as it was possible mortality could be;

but this happiness was of short duration, for the worthy Ho-ang-ti was one morning found dead upon his pallet. This was a dreadful blow to Chun: the whole face of nature seemed changed to him; and, while he stood contemplating the lifeless corse of his kind master, tears chased each other down his youthful face, and his heart felt as though it were bursting. “It was but
 “yesterday,” he said, “it was but yesterday that he expressed his appro-
 “bation of my conduct, and pressed
 “my hand in his. How little did I
 “think when next this hand met mine
 “it would cause such agony within my
 “bosom. Now I have lost my only
 “friend, and all the consolation that is
 “left me is to remember that I never
 “have offended him.”

In the coffin* of Ho-ang-ti was found a letter directed to Ki-ang-tse, his brother-in-law, who was a Mandarin at Arms, and lived at Peking. Chun, who would not leave the body of his master, despatched this letter as soon as it was discovered, rightly conjecturing that it contained his will. Ki-ang-tse, who was a man of real sense and feeling, was so confounded at the melancholy news, that it was some time before he could

* The people of China have their coffins by them some years before they are wanted, and they are often made of planks three feet thick. A poor man is miserable until he has saved money sufficient to purchase one for himself. Some men keep the bodies of their parents above ground for many years, preserving them as precious relicts, and no magistrate can force them to bury their dead. They never embalm the body.

peruse the packet, which contained the following words:—

“ To the warm-hearted Ki-ang-tse.

“ Although no blood of thine makes
 “ blue the veins that fill my earthly
 “ frame, yet do I feel for thee affection
 “ more than fraternal. When thy father
 “ espoused my widowed mother, I was
 “ a little untaught boy: thou wert
 “ arrived at the full bloom of manhood;
 “ yet, instead of looking down on my
 “ inferiority, thou didst let me profit by
 “ thy experience, and instructed me
 “ thyself, even as thou didst instruct
 “ thine own sweet child.—Thou hast
 “ often rallied me upon my sad presen-
 “ timents; I feel them strongly now.—
 “ Should I be early called upon to quit
 “ my large possessions, to whom can I
 “ so well intrust them as to thee and
 “ thine? Accept them then my more than

“brother, and grant me in return this
 “last request—that I may rest beside
 “my mother, whose mortal part reposes
 “in the tomb of thy ancestors.—
 “Amongst my treasures thou wilt
 “find a slave called Chun: he is most
 “worthy, and will prove a faithful
 “steward to thee. I would ask thee
 “to——”

“Alas, poor brother!” Ki-ang-tse
 sighed out, “what hadst thou more
 “to ask? Perhaps thou didst intend to
 “finish thy epistle upon the morrow,
 “and that morrow never came to thee!
 “Happy indeed it is that thou hast led an
 “innocent and virtuous life, and hadst
 “no crimes or follies to repent of!”

Grand preparations were now made
 for the last journey of the good Ho-
 ang-ti. Ki-ang-tse himself visited Ho-
 nan, to take possession of that beautiful

estate, and to attend the funeral as chief mourner. He was so much pleased with Chun's most interesting countenance and manner, and with his unfeigned grief, that he not only suffered him to join the grand procession, but invited him to his own house, and treated him with every mark of kindness.

Pekin appeared like a new world to Chun. He was surprised to see so many hundreds busy in the streets, and grieved to find that the poorer sort fed on vermin, such as cats, rats, and mice, and that there were regular butchers for the slaughtering of dogs.

“ Ah! happy, happy Chun,” said he, “ thou canst feed on wholesome rice of thine own planting, and slake thy thirst with water from the chrystal spring!” He was much amused with

the bustling industry of some, particularly the walking barber*.

Ki-ang-tse treated Chun with more attention than ever had been paid a slave before, appropriating to his use the very chamber in which the late Ho-ang-ti used to repose.

A happy conscience rendered the sleep of Chun sweet and refreshing, until the night preceding his departure

* A great number of barbers are continually walking the streets, with a little kind of bell, to give notice of their approach to such as want to make use of them. They carry on their shoulder a stool, their bason, their kettle, and their fire, with a towel and comb-case; and, whenever it is desired, they shave the head or chin very dexterously; they set the eyebrows in order, clean the ears with instruments, stretch out the arms, and rub the shoulders, and all this for the value of three farthings, which they receive with a great deal of gratitude; then ring their bell, and go in search of more customers.

from Pekin, when he was tortured by a vision the most terrific. He fancied that he saw his late good master writhing in agony, and in terms the most affecting imploring his assistance. Chun endeavoured to promise, but the organs of speech seemed to be defective: he could only utter sounds unintelligible, even to himself, and he awoke in an agitation the most distressing. It was long before he could again compose himself to sleep, and when he did, an object the most ghastly met his fancy's eye. It was the form of his late master; it seemed transparent, and a sulphurous fire was playing round the heart. It fixed its hollow eyes on him, and, in a voice half choaked by deep-fetched sighs, it said—"Oh! it is terrible to die with
"unrepented crimes upon the consci-
"ence. Protect what thou shalt find!

“strengthen its mind with knowledge,
 “and its heart with virtue, and save
 “thy master from the dreadful appre-
 “hension that he shall have the crimes
 “of others added to his own; and, at
 “the great tribunal, be condemned for
 “ever!”

Chun again essayed to speak, but could not; the spectre gradually disappeared, and he awoke. Yet still he thought himself under the influence of a dream, for even now he heard a dismal moaning, and at intervals a hollow groan, which almost rent his heart in twain! He was certain that no one could be in his chamber, nor was it situated near that of any other person. Endeavouring to conjecture what could occasion such mysterious noises, he again dropped asleep, but was soon awakened by some one calling loudly on his

name. He started from his bed, and perceived a blueish flame quivering directly opposite; he tried to seize it, and grasped nothing but air. It now gradually moved along the wall, and seemed to exit at the door of his apartment. He stood motionless for some moments, and then retired to his bed, but soon he saw the flame in the same corner, and heard a voice say—"Follow!" The light then moved along the wall, and departed as before. Chun could not close his eyes, but kept them fixed upon the corner, where he had first beheld the strange mysterious light. It presently returned, and the same voice said—"Follow!" It then moved along the wall, and, stopping at the door, the voice said—"In the name of your late
" master, in the name of the good Ho-
" ang-ti, I charge you follow!"

Chun instantly arose, and taking up his bag of fox-skin, which contained provisions for his journey, silently attended it. The light led him along several halls and galleries, then through the public door, which he closed after him, and followed his mysterious conductor. Sometimes he fancied that he saw the waving of a black garment, but then he found it was occasioned by the rays of light that issued from the flame, that was now become extremely bright, and raised high in the air. It led him through many narrow places, and round several corners, and at last burst into sparks, that seemed to ascend even to the heavens, and make themselves fixed stars. Chun fell prostrate upon the ground, and in that position he remained until he was aroused by the plaintive cries of a young baby.

Cautiously then he moved upon his hands and feet until he reached it. He gave it, from his bag, what he thought best adapted to its tender age, and then lulled it on his bosom until it dropped asleep. As he feared to lose his way, he kept his seat till the dark clouds divided, and shewed the ruddy mantle of Aurora: he then examined that of his young charge. She was wrapped in a vestment of the richest stuff, and on the bosom was embroidered two characters, which he had himself invented, to express *foster the friendless*.

This circumstance surprised him more than all the other wonders he had met with: he sat for many minutes pondering on the impossibility of their coming to the knowledge of any one, when the sun bursting forth in all his splendour, warned him to be gone. He emptied

his provisions into the outer mantle, in which the infant had been wrapped, and, turning his bag of fox-skin, made with it a soft cradle for his lovely foundling. He now pursued his journey with alacrity, and reached his little habitation by the opening of the third morning.

After placing Si-ling (for so he determined to call her) upon his pallet, he hastened to the dwelling of his late master, that he might inform his fellow slaves of his promotion; and so much beloved was he, that every one rejoiced at his advancement, and promised to himself a great increase of happiness, under so wise and just an overseer.

CHAP. II.

CHUN nursed the little Si-ling with the tenderest love, and when he saw her beauteous eyes sparkle with intelligence, and her mouth dimple with smiles at his approach, how grateful did he feel to providence for entrusting such a creature to his care.

With secrecy he nursed her, for he feared some one might take her from him: his parents he most dreaded, for they continued their unkindness, and sought by every means to make his life a wretched burthen, but Si-ling's presence was an healing balm for every unkind wound. His studies now gave double pleasure, for he hoped they would conduce to her improvement,

and every new discovery brought with it a ten-fold delight when it was understood by Si-ling. True she was every thing the fondest parent could have wished; though wild and playful as the mountain kid, her bosom was the seat of every tender feeling, every virtue; while the bright radiance that beamed in either eye bespoke her to possess a mind the most capacious.

One evening as she sat musing in the private garden of her foster father, "This," said she, "is the ninth summer that has blessed me with its sweets, and I have done nothing to deserve its favours. When I ask my father how it is that he can make such wonderful discoveries, he bids me search, and promises that some day I shall find. Oh that I could find something to pleasure him, and prove that I am

“worthy such a father.” She cast her eyes around, and fixed them on the yellow pods which hung in clusters on a wide-spreading mulberry tree. Her heart danced with rapture! “Surely,” she said, “the all-wise Tien designed the labour of that little creature for some useful purpose. Might it not be manufactured like a cotton* pod? I certainly will try, for my dear father says it is praise-worthy to endeavour to do good, even though you fail in the attempt.”

* The cotton shrub is one of the most useful in all China. On the same day that the husbandmen get in their harvest, they sow cotton in the same field, doing nothing else but raking the earth over the seeds. When the earth is moistened with rain or dew, there soon grows up a small shrub, about two feet high, the flowers of which appear at the beginning, or about the middle of August. They are generally yellow, but sometimes red. To this flower a small

It was long ere it succeeded to her wishes, but when it did, how well the beauty of the silk repaid her labour. With extacy she flew to acquaint her father, and, to her great surprize and sorrow, found him in tears.

Instantly her gaiety disappeared; and, when he asked what made her joyful at her entrance, she weeping said—
 “ Never shall Si-ling taste of joy, whilst
 “ her dear father sorrows! Oh! lodge-

button succeeds, growing in the shape of a pod, the bigness of a nut. The fortieth day after the appearance of the flower the pod opens of itself, and, dividing into three parts, discovers three or four wrappings of cotton, extremely white, and of the same figure as the cocoon of a silk-worm. They are fastened to the bottom of the open pod, and contain seeds for the following year. It is then time to get in the crop, but in fair weather they leave the fruit exposed to the sun two or three days, which, swelling by the heat, makes the profit the greater.

“ your griefs upon the bosom of your
“ child, and she will lull them to re-
“ pose.” He tenderly embraced her,
and desired to be made acquainted
with the cause of her joy. She pro-
duced her little work ; he examined it ;
and the blood ran cold within the veins
of Si-ling, for now she feared the senses
of her dear parent were deranged.

After examining the silk, he clasped
his hands, then raised his eyes to heaven,
and fell prostrate upon the earth. It
was sometime ere he arose ; when, see-
ing consternation depicted upon the
beauteous countenance of Si-ling, he
pressed her to his heart, saying—“ Be
“ not alarmed, my child, this little
“ work of thine will save my parents
“ from the grave, to which their ex-
“ treme poverty and the scarceness of
“ provisions nearly have reduced them.

“ I have supplied them from my little
“ store till it is quite exhausted, and I
“ was just lamenting that I had no
“ means left to save them from perish-
“ ing. Your beautiful invention shall
“ perform this happy office: the stuff
“ will please at court: yes, even the
“ haughty Empress will be proud to
“ wear a robe of this most beautiful
“ manufacture.”

Never had Si-ling tasted joy like this, for never had she seen her father so delighted. With extacy they set about their new employment: they improved upon it; Chun taught it to his parents, and it succeeded even beyond their expectation. In a short time his parents purchased slaves, set them to work, and in three years rose again into opulence. Yet would they not remember that they owed all this to Chun. His

mother was the weakest of all weak women; she idolized him when he was beautiful, and would boast among her female friends that never woman had a child so fair; but, when that outward loveliness had vanished, and she was laughed at by her acquaintance, who still insisted upon calling him her beauty, she loathed the sight of him, and seemed to have no pleasure like that of torturing and ill treating him.

Twelve years had now elapsed since that strange night—that night so crowded with mysterious incidents—the night which Chun had always reckoned as the happiest of his life, for it was the night that gave him little Si-ling. She was now the loveliest female in the whole empire; Chun felt for her an affection more than paternal, and therefore thought it proper she should be

made acquainted with her own history. She heard the tale with wonder, but with a pleasure that warmed the heart of Chun, for he intended, when his term of slavery expired, to espouse her. Nothing could equal the rapturous sensations which he felt, when, in the innocence of her heart, she said—"I thought it was impossible to love you better, but now I find how much I owe you, my bosom warms with an affection towards you such as I never felt before!" She then attempted to take his hand, but the blushes which flushed her cheeks, and the tears which rushed into her eyes, forbade her pressing it to her heart.

He then shewed her the rich mantle in which she had been wrapped, and the two large diamond bodkins with which it had been fastened. From

these it appeared her parents were of no mean condition. "I wish," said she, "I wish it could be proved that I was the offspring of the good Ho-ang-ti; but then, my mother! what must that mother be who could thus expose her helpless infant?" Chun told her that it was very common to expose the female children in the streets of Peking and Canton, and that some thousands perished in that way; but then it was supposed they were the children of those who were too poor to support them.

Si-ling, wishing to reflect upon her own strange history, requested to retire for a few hours into the garden. Chun acquiesced; and, giving her the mantle and the bodkins, bid her preserve them with the greatest care.

As soon as she was departed, Chun

crossed his arms upon his breast, and inwardly thanked heaven for its peculiar goodness. From this situation he was aroused by a loud knocking, and the sound of ill-timed merriment. Upon opening the gate he found it was occasioned by the city servants of his master Ki-ang-tse. "We are come to give you joy!" said they, "Our master has sold this estate, and you and all your fellow slaves are free!" This news communicated no pleasure to the heart of Chun, and when he heard their resolution not to leave him until a tub of wine which they had brought should be entirely emptied, he was sorely grieved, and his endeavours to silence their loud mirth, or leave the room in search of Si-ling, were equally vain, for they by force detained him, nor could he find means to leave them

until they had fallen upon the floor in a state of insensibility. The sun had arisen : he called loudly on her name ; but hearing no reply, he hoped to find her sleeping in a little harbour, which she herself had formed ; but his heart was chilled with horror when, instead of Si-ling, he found pieces of her garments scattered on the ground, and a large lock of hair, which evidently had been torn from off her head.

He beat his breast and wrung his hands. “If it was the will of providence,” said he, “I could submit even to this ; but it is some accursed enemy who has torn her from me, and she will be polluted!” He hid his face within his hands, and wept in agony. Then, rising up, “Polluted ! did I say ? No !—Si-ling will die first : she is all innocence ! The great Tien watches

“over innocence.—Yes, he that pre-
 “served her when she was an helpless
 “infant, will protect her still! Ah!
 “may not this cruel plot have been
 “contrived by yonder drunken slaves?”

He hasted to his dwelling, and the servants were still sleeping: he soon aroused them, but the answers which they gave his interrogatories were a loud laugh, and—“Lost a female!—
 “Oh! we will search for her, if you
 “will agree that he who finds her
 “has her?”

They threw each other down in endeavouring to be first. Chun followed, but without the smallest hope of finding his lost treasure. They had not proceeded far along the road, when a grand procession appeared in view: they stood aside to observe it; but what was the surprise of Chun when he perceived his

father seated in a sumptuous car, and his two brothers riding on milk-white horses, richly caparisoned? At length he found that it was his parents who had purchased the estate. His heart sunk within him; the blood forsook his cheeks; and he fell lifeless on the ground.

When he recovered, he found himself in a superb apartment, in which were many persons, but the one nearest to him was his mother. She was dressed in all the splendour of the east: she had been assisting in recovering him, for which he felt a glow of gratitude; and, sinking on his knees, he took her hand, and would have pressed it to his lips, but she haughtily withdrew it, declaring, that he who had disgraced his family by serving as a slave, had not the smallest claim on her affection.

" Oh! cruel, cruel!" cried the agitated Chun, " Did I not sell myself
 " to purchase comforts for you and for
 " my father? Have I ever let slip an
 " opportunity of administering to your
 " wants? Of what horrid act have I
 " been guilty that you should treat
 " with such barbarity the son whom
 " once you loved with an affection so
 " extravagant?" She could give no
 reasonable answer to these questions,
 and therefore said, " Treat your mother
 " with confidence, and that way regain
 " her love. Where is the beautiful fe-
 " male whom you kept concealed so
 " many years?" Seeing that Chun was
 gasping for breath, and unable to an-
 swer her, she continued—" I heard the
 " story from the servants of the man-
 " darin Ki-ang-tse." " And you have
 " torn her from me! Great Parent of

“ the Universe! listen to my distracted
 “ prayer, and let not a cruel mother
 “ thus triumph in the agonies of her
 “ afflicted child! Oh! give me back
 “ my Si-ling!” Here he fell upon his
 knees, and caught his mother’s robe,
 when, feeling it was made of silk, and
 remembering that Si-ling was the in-
 ventor of that article, his senses again
 forsook him, and he fell lifeless at
 her feet.

On his recovery he perceived that
 his mother and her attendants had left
 the room, and he now gave free vent to
 his tears. “ Oh, Si-ling!” he cried,
 “ lovely, innocent, enchanting Si-ling!
 “ thou art lost, and there is not one
 “ human being in the world who feels
 “ affection for unhappy Chun!” “ Yes,”
 said an infant voice, “ Gen-si will love
 “ you—Gen-si will always love poor

“brother Chun.” He looked around, and saw a pretty little girl, of five years old, squeezed in between two cushions, where she had concealed herself.

Chun knew he had a sister about that age, but he had never been allowed to see her. She was habited like an Indian princess, and, running to his arms, she tenderly embraced him, while Chun, with all the warmth of true affection, pressed her to his heart. “How didst thou know,” said he, “thou pretty young one, that poor “unhappy Chun was thine own brother?” “Oh, I have heard them talk “of you, and say that you was such a “pretty baby; aye, prettier than I am! “and I have always longed to see you, “because I thought when Gen-si should “grow ugly, poor brother Chun would “love her still. But you are not ugly;

“you are a great deal prettier than
“brother Yang, or brother Nang-po.”

Here they were interrupted by hearing some one loudly calling “Gen-si!”
“Hush!” said she, “do not answer
“them, for indeed I will not go. If
“they have stolen away your Si-ling,
“I will stay with you till they bring
“her back.” The whole house was by
this time in deep confusion: the child
was lost! Presently the mother, wringing
her hands, rushed into the apartment,
where, to her great surprise, she found
her darling in the arms of Chun. Gen-si
immediately ran towards her, crying—
“Do, pray, dear mother, give
“Si-ling back to my poor brother.”
Chun joined his entreaties, but the
mother solemnly protested that she
had never seen her, nor had the smallest
knowledge of who had carried her

away. Gen-si, however, would not leave the room till she obtained a promise that she should see her brother every day. To this her mother readily consented, for she wished him to be a witness of her magnificence, secretly determining that he should never be a partaker of it. Let no one think her character overstrained, or over highly coloured, for, as a good heart is ever seeking objects to exercise its benevolence upon, so is a bad one ever anxious in seeking opportunities of indulging its malevolent dispositions.— Besides, Chun's mother liked to copy her superiors, and she had a pattern in the Empress, vile and blood-thirsty: *her* chief happiness consisted in inventing new tortures; and the groans of the dying sounded like sweet music in her ears.

Chun continued performing the same laborious tasks as when he was a slave, and his only relaxation was instructing little Gen-si; yet did he not envy the luxurious lives his brothers led, at which his mother was extremely angry. What was the use of all their grandeur if no one saw it but those who held it in contempt? Acquaintance she had none, for she would not associate with those who were so formerly, and those who were now her equals in fortune could not forget that her husband had been guilty of a misdemeanor, and that she was an haughty, ignorant, imperious woman; she had therefore no amusement but in quarrelling with her servants whilst they were putting on her splendid robes; then sitting before the glass, and quarrelling with that, for not reflecting her as young and lovely

as it used to do: and, although providence had showered its choicest blessings on her, she was always murmuring and discontented: even her husband grew weary of her continual ill humours, purchased himself another wife, and entirely estranged himself from her society. This calamity, as she had brought it on herself, was insupportable, and she determined to make her family as wretched as herself. In this she succeeded so well, that her slaves gladly would have poisoned her, but that the fear of punishment deterred them.

To complete her troubles, her little daughter, who had long passed her seventh year, and whose beauty had been so talked of that many mandarins of eminence already had solicited the promise of her hand—the pretty Gen-si

was seized with a complaint which in that country always proves fatal. The mother rent her hair, and prayed to all the gilded gods her house contained. She endeavoured to make Gen-si assist in these devotions, but she had attended to the instructions of her brother Chun, and would pray only as he had taught her. At length she died!

The mother's eyes seemed bursting from their sockets! she tore the lifeless child from off the bed, and paced the room with wild disordered step. Scarce could they force the body from her arms, and when they did, she seized poor Chun by the ears, and, shaking him violently, said he was the greatest enemy she had, and she was sure he had prevailed on Gen-si to resign her life to the great God he worshipped—
“For I am certain,” continued she,

" he is most powerful, and I overheard
 " you praying him to take her, per-
 " suading her to have no fear of death,
 " and promising to join her in the
 " gardens of everlasting happiness."
 " And that," said Chun, " is now my
 " only comfort. Oh, lovely Gen-si!
 " my angelic sister! if from thy seat of
 " bliss thou canst behold thy poor,
 " forlorn, deserted brother, pray to the
 " God of Mercy that he will soon re-
 " move him from this world of cares,
 " and turn the heart of thy distracted
 " mother; that, when her spirit quits
 " its tenement of clay, it may ascend
 " to heaven, and there enjoy perpetual
 " happiness with that of little Gen-si."

He then concealed his face within his
 hands, sunk on his knees, and bowed
 his head even to the earth. He remained
 in that position for some time: when

he arose, he was surprised to see his mother calmly seated by the side of her child, her arms folded on her breast, and her eyes swollen with weeping. Her frantic sorrow had alarmed him, but this silent grief melted his heart, and gave existence to a sensation such as he had never felt towards her before. Again he sunk upon his knees, and humbly asked her blessing: she deigned to place her hand upon his head, and the warm heart of Chun bounded with duteous love, and silently forgave her every pang that she had made it suffer.

Hearing that his father had entered the apartments, he asked leave to retire, that he might not be a witness of the grief he knew that he must feel at hearing of the death of this his only daughter.

On the succeeding day Chun worked about the fields, and never once entered the dwelling of his father; but, on the day succeeding that, a storm arose, such as had never been remembered: some of the largest trees were split in twain, while others were torn up by the roots; the cattle, running for shelter, were struck dead, and every thing contributed to make a scene of awful devastation! Chun spent the hours in prayer, until he received a summons to attend his mother: he instantly obeyed, and found her in an agony that cannot be described. “Oh! Chun,” said she, “what means this dreadful storm? I fear your God is angry, and will not be appeased until he has destroyed the whole of our possessions. What will become of me? What can I do?” “Kneel down and pray to him,” said

Chun. "Oh! I am afraid," she slowly whispered. "I never thanked him for his blessings, and he will think I shall return again to my ungrateful course: but indeed, indeed——" Here an awful flash of lightning, followed by a most tremendous clap of thunder, tore up a stately tree that grew before her window: it fell against the mansion, and shook it to its foundation! She dropped upon her knees, and raised her hands and eyes to heaven. Chun wept aloud; the mother fainted: he bore her to her couch, and, by the time he had recovered her, the storm had nearly spent itself. She clasped her hands, and said, "Oh, Tien! thou art great indeed!"—Chun advised her to repose, and offered to retire, but she entreated him to stay. "I feel more safe," said she, "when you are near me; for, oh! I fear again to

“encounter the terrific visions of last
“night!” He promised not to leave
her, and soon she sunk to sleep.

She awoke calm and refreshed. Chun led her to the window, and pointed out to her astonished eyes a rainbow, of amazing brightness and extent. She, who had never noticed nature’s beauties, was struck with wonder and with awe.

Refreshments were brought in, and Chun continued with her: there was a long silence. At length the mother said—“It was but this morning I
“thought my every hope was dead in
“little Gen-si; now my affliction will
“admit a balm, and I feel more resigned:
“canst thou tell the cause, my son?”
“It is that you now have some reliance
“upon the great Tien, and hope to join
“her. It is that hope, and that reli-
“ance, that has supported me under so

“ many trials. Nothing could surpass
“ the love I bore to Si-ling, yet you
“ have never heard me utter the sweet
“ name since the sad day when you as-
“ sured me you had no hand in her
“ disastrous fate! You saw the end of
“ her you loved, and must be certain
“ that no misfortune now can reach her.
“ My love was torn from me by bar-
“ barous hands, and this the only relict
“ that is left me.” So saying, he took
the beautiful lock of glossy hair from
his sad bosom. It had been torn out
by the roots, which were now closely
cemented by the blood that had accom-
panied them when they were forced
from off her aching head. Chun pressed
it to his heart, and wept. “I keep it
“ safe,” said he, “for it is my only
“ treasure: had I no reliance upon Tien,
“ my life would be most wretched: I

“ should never enjoy my food, for fear
 “ that she was starving : I should never
 “ find repose, for fear that some rude
 “ wretch had murdered her’s ! But well
 “ I feel assured that Tien will not suffer
 “ it. She is one of his most glorious
 “ works, and he will never allow her
 “ to be despoiled by a base mortal !”

“ Hark !” said the mother, “ what
 “ means that tinkling of bells? *—
 “ Surely,” said she, in great surprise,
 “ surely it must be a messenger from
 “ court?” They sat some time in
 anxious expectation : at length they
 heard the name of Chun voiceferated
 through the gardens ; and presently the

* There is no post in China. The Emperor’s
 despatches are carried by a man on horseback :
 the letters are placed in a belt, which is fastened
 round his waist, and has a number of small bells
 sewed to the bottom of it.

father, breathless and pale with fear, came into the apartments.

“Chun,” said he, “you must obey the
“mandate of the great Emperor, and
“instantly repair to court. Oh! I fear
“a sentence the most terrible awaits
“our house.” “Fear not for me, my
“father—if Providence ordains that I
“should end my life by some ingenious
“torture, my sufferings will be short.
“What is the anguish of a wound
“given to the body compared to those
“inflicted on the mind? My mind has
“been so torn, so lacerated—but that
“is past, and worse can never befall
“me!” He then, embracing his pa-
rents, said—“Weep not for me; for, if
“it is my fate to suffer on the rack, or
“to be cut into ten thousand pieces,
“I shall know that every stroke will
“bring me nearer to my end, and then

“ I feel assured a great, a glorious re-
 “ ward awaits me!” So saying, he
 rushed from the apartments. His pa-
 rents gazed on each other in silence:
 at length the mother said—“ I fear the
 “ malice of the Queen has reached us?”

“ No; the messenger informs me
 “ she is dead.”

“ How? I pray you tell me how?”

“ And is it possible you can thus
 “ eagerly enquire the fate of others,
 “ when you should tremble for your
 “ own? What if you should be brought
 “ to trial for the cruel treatment you
 “ have given to your most worthy son?”

“ The cruel treatment I have given
 “ him, sir? I?”

“ Yes, madam, you. Has it not been
 “ the business and the pleasure of your
 “ life to mortify and torture that un-
 “ happy youth?”

“ And pray, sir, how happened it,
 “ that with your pitiful and tender
 “ heart, you never did correct or thwart
 “ my most unjust proceedings?”

“ Because, madam, like the great Em-
 “ peror himself, I was governed by a
 “ blind partiality for my wife, and on
 “ that plea I build my hopes of pardon.
 “ But you, I fear, will feel the utmost
 “ rigour of the law, unless your poor
 “ ill-treated son should intercede in your
 “ behalf; then, perhaps, it might be
 “ softened into imprisonment for life in
 “ some dark solitary chamber; or——”

“ Cool insolence! And have you
 “ then forgotten who it was applied the
 “ bastinado to his back, as a reward for
 “ his unparalleled and generous con-
 “ duct?”

This circumstance had quite escaped
 the memory of the father, and the re-

collection of it made him change his tone. "I was but jesting with thee, "love," said he. "We have both been "faulty, and must now be friends, nor "try to aggravate each other by rak- "ing up past cruelties, but both en- "deavour to obtain the pardon of him "we have so injured."

"Pray," said the lady, "pray, sir, "intercede for pardon by yourself.— "My son and I are the most cordial "friends."

"Nay, but my love——"

"No, sir! your *love* lives on the "other side the mansion—your concu- "bine I mean. Your wife has lost her "share of your affection!"

"No, indeed, my life, we shall be "firmer friends."

"Never, sir! Never!"

"Ah, thus it is; like the great Em-

“press to the last, to satiate thy vengeance wreck it on thyself!”

Yang-fo scarce breathed, in hopes of hearing something more about the Empress. Her husband saw that curiosity was seated on her brow, and therefore checked his tongue, and sat with folded arms, and head bent towards the earth. She suffered him to sit in that position for some time; then offered him refreshments: he bowed, but did not taste them. Again some minutes passed, and she observed how beautifully the sun shone after the dreadful storm: again he bowed, but did not answer. At length she said—“I think that I will order my chair, and hasten to Pekin; I then shall know the worst, and——”

“That would be dangerous, love,” said he. “The shocking death of the

“ great Empress has——”

“ Shocking?” involuntarily escaped her lips.

“ Yes, my love. It seems an innocent
 “ old man was doomed to suffer an ex-
 “ cruciating torture. The Colao * in-
 “ terposed, and told the Emperor that
 “ he never could expect his subjects
 “ to honour and obey him, whilst he
 “ allowed himself to be governed by
 “ a vindictive, cruel woman! The en-
 “ raged Empress darted a look of fury
 “ at him; and, calling to her slaves,
 “ ordered a goblet of Formoso water †
 “ to be brought her. ‘ I fear you not,’
 “ said the firm minister. ‘ I am weary
 “ ‘ of being a daily witness of such
 “ ‘ cruelties, and care not how I end

* The first minister of state.

† The waters of Formoso are a deadly poison: only the water of the capital can be drank.

“ ‘my life.’ The poison being brought,
“ the Empress presented it herself; but
“ the Emperor, gently pushing back her
“ hand, said—‘ No! I fear that he is
“ ‘right, and I am guilty.’ This wicked
“ woman, burning with rage, and being
“ unable to revenge herself on him, she
“ hated, lifted the poison to her own
“ lips, and drank it down, even to the
“ very dregs. Her sufferings were long,
“ and it is supposed more agonising than
“ any she had caused to be inflicted
“ upon others. Sometimes she fancied
“ that the ghosts of her departed victims
“ were tearing out her entrails; and,
“ when her weeping husband said her
“ tender body could not long endure
“ such agonies; ‘ Ah! but my soul!’
“ said she, ‘ my soul is doomed to suffer
“ ‘ agonies perpetual.’

“ Her death has caused a mighty
“ change in the great Emperor, and he
“ resolves to make atonement for his
“ ill-spent life, by protecting the inno-
“ cent, and putting to the torture every
“ guilty wretch in his dominions, and
“ much I fear that we shall not escape
“ unpunished.”

CHAP. III.

BUT to return to Chun.—When he left the last court of his father's mansion, he perceived six horsemen waiting. One of them led a horse towards him, and motioned that he should mount it, which he immediately did, and another brought him a bag of provisions and a flask of wine; they then separated, three riding in the front of Chun, and three behind. In this manner they travelled all night, and all the next day, and when they dismounted it was too dark for him to see what kind of mansion he was led into, but a lamp within the chamber shewed him a comfortable bed; and a servant, who brought in

warm refreshments, motioned that there he might repose. The servants never spoke; and he, determining to yield himself to Providence, asked them no questions. After making a most hearty supper he retired to rest, and slept soundly until the morning.

Soon after he arose a servant entered with a cake of rice and a cup of tea; and, presently after, a man entered, who, by his gestures, shewed he was a posture-master, and that he was come to teach him how to bow and run, in the most graceful manner. Chun was excessively surprised, yet still he did not ask the meaning, but took his lessons with great humility for several mornings.

At last a servant entered, and told him that he must prepare himself to receive a visitor. Soon after a man

of noble presence entered : in his countenance was gravity blended with great sweetness : and, when Chun bowed himself to the earth, his august visitor did the same. He then desired him to be seated, and said—"Chun, you must attend upon the great Emperor, and answer truly every question that shall be put to you." If his conscience had accused him of any crime, this summons would have made him tremble ; but Chun had never caused unhappiness to any thing that God had blessed with life ; no, not even an insect, or a reptile ! Willingly therefore he followed his conductor, who seemed indeed to regard him as a superior being.

In the middle of the courts of the imperial palace there is a path paved with large stones, on which the Em-

peror walks when he goes out, and those that pass on it must run fast, which is a mark of respect they observe when they pass before a person of quality.

After passing through eight courts, at last they arrived at his apartment. He was in a cang, for thus they call a great hall or parlour, that stands by itself, where the Emperor lives, and which is carried upon slabs of white marble. This cang was composed of a hall, in which there was a throne: he was sitting in a can, or alcove, raised three feet, which took up the whole length of the room. The can was covered with a plain white felt: perhaps he affected this simplicity, as being in mourning for the Empress. His habit was only of white satin, lined with the fur of sables.

As soon as any one enters the court,

he must run in a graceful manner till he arrives at the bottom of the chamber which is opposite to the Emperor ; then, being in the front in the same line, he must stand a little time with both arms extended, and after bending his knees, bow down to the ground three times, then rise up again ; and repeat the ceremony three times, till he is commanded to advance, and kneel at the Emperor's feet.

The Emperor desired him to arise, and then said—"Chun, I charge you, " on your allegiance, to answer all such " questions as I shall put to you with " strict sincerity, nor for one moment " think that it is curiosity alone that " prompts me to make the interro- " gatories."

Chun placed his hand upon his heart,

and bowed. The Emperor continued—
 “It is said thy personal endowments
 “were once the theme of every pro-
 “vince—hast thou not bitterly regret-
 “ted the deprivation of them?”

“Never, great sir! I regard it as the
 “first visitation of Tien. Had I re-
 “tained that outward gloss I never
 “should have known *myself*, the *world*,
 “or *him*.”

“Again—It is said that thou didst
 “sell thyself to purchase comforts for
 “thy sick father, who must have died
 “without this timely aid: and that he
 “repaid thy filial love with cruelty
 “unparalleled—didst thou not then
 “regret that thou hadst made thyself
 “a slave for such a parent?”

“Oh, no! the thought always brings
 “comfort with it. I call it to remem-

“brance, that it may warm my heart
 “whenever it is chilled by cruel dis-
 “appointment.”

“If thou didst not repent the gene-
 “rous act, why didst thou suffer thy
 “senses to forsake thee?”

“Because my feelings were so strong;
 “my power to govern them so weak.”

“Lastly—It is said that thou didst
 “find a female infant: nourished and
 “instructed it with the tenderest care;
 “and, when she was about to repay
 “thee with her virtuous love, ruthless
 “barbarians tore her from thy arms.”

The Emperor perceiving the extreme
 agitation of Chun, felt great com-
 passion towards him; and, in the kind-
 est manner, said—“Dost thou not
 “think it had been better if Provi-
 “dence had left us without these
 “violent passions, which lead even the

“best of us into errors—sometimes
“into crimes?”

“The passions,” replied Chun, “will
“never injure him who endeavours to
“rule them. The heart, like a clear
“mirror, is not sullied by reflecting
“all sorts of objects.”

“But,” said the Emperor, “if thou
“hadst power over the wretches who
“robbed thee of thy Si-ling, wouldest
“thou not put them to a death most
“violent?”

“No, surely,” replied Chun; “I
“would resign them to the great Em-
“peror of the world, who will not leave
“vice without punishment, or virtue
“without reward, whatever the present
“condition of both may be.”

“Of one part of that great truth,”
replied the Emperor, “thou art a bright
“example.” He then arose, descended

from the throne, and, taking a party-coloured robe* from the Colao, he presented it to Chun, saying—"Accept this as an earnest of my future favours. Next—I request thee to accept the mandarinship of thy native province. The soil is so unfruitful that the unhappy husbandman labours in vain. Go, worthy Chun, instruct them to improve their land, and make them happy: it is a task well suited to thy generous heart and skilful hand." Chun made the nine customary bows, and left the presence.

Beyond the outer porch he found a grand assembly waiting to escort him to his province, where he was received

* The Emperor of China cannot give a more magnificent proof of his esteem than a robe, made of little squares, of every colour, designed to represent the various virtues of different nations.

with loud acclamations by all ranks of people. Many remembered him; and, recollecting that his father was a gambler and a cheat, they revered Chun the more, because he had preserved his virtuous principles under so bad a parent. They had heard his character, and were prepared to love him, and do every thing that he should order; so that, in twenty months, the province of Chen-si became, and continues to this day, the most fertile and beautiful in the whole empire.

At length the Emperor recalled him; and, surely, never was the departure of mandarin so much regretted. At an early hour the streets were thronged; and, while the poor testified their gratitude by tears, and fervent prayers for his prosperity, the richest inhabitants had prepared feasts at the distance

of every league, that he and his whole suite might refresh themselves. Every doner, having provided a pair of new boots, himself placed them upon the legs of Chun, preserving those which he had worn as precious relics*.

On his return Chün was again brought before the Emperor, who, rising and descending from the throne, prevented the obeisance which he was preparing to make, by taking his hand, and saying, at the same time—" Oh, " Chun! I acknowledge thy superiority " over me in every thing, and therefore " I resign the empire to thy care. Nay, " not a word; my people will love me " for this act of justice; it is the only " atonement I can make them for the

* It is still customary in China to pay these honours to a Mandarin who has acquitted himself with credit in his province.

“ many acts of cruelty which I have
“ suffered to be inflicted upon them.
“ I resign to you my throne ; not that
“ the people may be your servants, but
“ that you may be their father, and
“ preserve justice, peace, and regularity
“ in the dominions.”

Chun was immediately proclaimed Emperor, and ascended the throne, when all the princes, lords, prime officers of the army and the crown, with the mandarins of all the tribunals, prostrated themselves at his feet three times, and, at each prostration, touched the ground with their foreheads, and made the nine customary bows. Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the great court where this ceremony was performed. All the mandarins were ranged on both sides, dressed in silk gowns, flowered with gold, in

the form of roses. There were fifty that carried umbrellas of gold brocade and silk, with their staves gilt, and were divided into two rows, twenty-five on each side the throne. Near them were thirty officers, with large fans, embroidered with gold, and near these last were twenty-eight large standards, embroidered with golden stars, great dragons, and the figures of the new and full moon, with all its different phases and appearances, to represent the twenty-eight mansions of the heavens, and their conjunctions and oppositions with the sun, as they appear in the intersections of the circles, which the astronomers call the dragon's head and tail. An hundred other standards followed these, and the rest of the mandarins carried maces, axes, hammers, and other instruments of war

or ceremony, with heads of monsters, and divers animals.

The uproar without the court was so great, it was thought politic that Chun should shew himself, which he immediately did. All was silent for some time, when an old man cried out from the middle of the croud—"May heaven, oh, great sir! preserve your life for many years! May it grant you a numerous posterity, and render you master of all the treasures of the universe!"

"You are deceived in your wishes," replied Chun. "Many cares attend great riches; a numerous progeny occasions great uneasiness; and long life often becomes disgusting of itself."

"To have great riches," returned the old man, "and to pour them into

“ the bosom of the unfortunate, is
 “ the true source of pleasure. Should
 “ heaven bless thee with an innocent
 “ and virtuous posterity, the more
 “ numerous they are the more agree-
 “ able it is to be a father. If virtue
 “ reigns in the world, one cannot live
 “ too long with those who obey its
 “ dictates : if it be neglected, we retire,
 “ and enjoy it in solitude, and rise
 “ afterwards upon a radiant cloud, even
 “ to the throne of Tien !”

Others expressed their wishes to the
 same effect, and he retired, amidst the
 loud applauses of the populace. He
 felt a rapturous glow of gratitude at
 this instance of the people's love ; else
 did he seem depressed rather than
 elevated at this sudden change from
 poverty to grandeur. His warm and
 generous heart panted for some con-

genial one to stamp a value on the gift by sharing it; but she, his only love; the sympathising Si-ling, she was lost; and he resolved not to insult her memory by tasting any joy save that which should arise from doing good. He seemed to yield rather than rule; and though the coronation dinner was composed of every delicacy the empire could produce, yet would a tear (spite of his strong endeavours to prevent it) steal down his cheek, and his swollen throat oppose the passage of the viands, when he compared them with the homely but delicious ones of his own hut, to which the presence of the child of his affection gave a zest.

A tragedy was performed during the dinner; and, when the guests were all departed, the Colao informed him that the princesses and ladies of the

court, willing to express their joy at his high exaltation, had prepared a little entertainment, at which himself and ministers only could be present.

Chun followed his conductor to a large apartment, elegantly fitted up. At one end was a raised balcony, fronted with a trellis-work of green and gold: in this balcony the ladies were seated; and, soon after the Emperor entered, the concert began with a loud chorus.

“Hail! hail! hail!

“Hail to the great parent of the
 “universe! who has seen the distresses
 “of his children, and heard their
 “prayers; recalled the cruel murderer
 “of their dear relatives, and placed a
 “lover of equity and justice on the
 “throne.—Long may he reign!”

After a pause, a voice, soft and

melodious, sung the following solo :—

“ May the partner of *his* splendour
 “ be the soother of his cares. May her
 “ heart dance with rapture at his
 “ approach, or when she listens to his
 “ praises. May the domestic joys of
 “ evening repay him for the toils of
 “ the day, that he never may regret
 “ having been forced to leave his happy
 “ home, and the dear, loved associates
 “ of his youth. May his children
 “ stand around him like the shoots of
 “ the bamboo. May they be early
 “ taught to reverence his virtues, that
 “ they may strive to imitate them, and
 “ give the evening of his life a cloud-
 “ less sky.”

Chun was almost lost in rapture, the voice was so entrancing: the subject of the verses too raised him to the pinnacle of human bliss; but, when the

music ceased, his spirits sunk, he heaved a sigh, and felt assured such bliss could never be his. Upon reflection, the emotion of the singer much displeased him. It was a great wickedness, he thought, to teach young girls such soft, seducing arts: wondered that men of sense were not disgusted with a female who could so well express what it was impossible that she could feel, and none but her old governante* had taught her to express, and he secretly resolved to prohibit all nurseries of voluptuousness. Again the music sounded, and presently the ladies entered danc-

* There are a number of old women in the province of Se-tchou who make a living by purchasing handsome well-made girls, whose feet they suffer to continue of the natural size; they have them taught music, dancing, and all sorts of accomplishments, and then sell them to gentlemen for concubines.

ing to the lively melody. It all appeared like enchantment: Chun enquired of the minister which was the female who had sung alone? She was not there—his heart sunk within him, but soon he rallied it. “Ah!” said he, “thou truant, thou shalt not be false to Si-ling, though death has clasped her to his icy breast.” A variation in the music made him raise his eyes, and he beheld a female the most graceful he had ever seen: her dress was simple, and her movements modest, yet there was something in her manner that plainly shewed she wished to gain the heart of the new Emperor; but he, determining that she should not succeed, endeavoured to keep his eyes from her most fascinating person; but, finding that impossible—“Well then,” said he, “I will indulge my fancy for

“ this once ; but never, never again will
 “ I expose myself to such temptation.”
 When the dance was ended the Colao
 desired the ladies to unveil. Chun
 bent his head downwards, for he
 feared to look upon them, but the mi-
 nister softly whispered him, the ladies
 would be quite unhappy, and think
 they had offended him, if he refused to
 see them: he therefore raised his head,
 but still he kept his eyes fixed on the
 ground. The ladies passed him one by
 one, each making a low reverence, and
 pronouncing the words “ *Van fo**.”

* The Chinese women make a reverence, or cour-
 tesy, in the same manner as those of Europe.—
 In the beginning of the monarchy, when simplicity
 reigned, women were permitted, when they made a
 courtesy to a man, to make use of these two words,
van fo. *Van*, signifies ten thousand, and *fo*, happi-
 ness. Now it is not thought decent to address a
 man in that manner.

Chun actually trembled, and could not prevent his downcast eyes from wandering after the habiliments of her who, in spite of his reason, had delighted him. She came the last of all, made her courtesy very slowly, and repeated the words *van fo*. Chun's heart bounded to his throat, yet he kept his eyes upon the ground: she waited more than a minute, and still he kept his resolution! She laid a paper on his knee; he pushed it from him, as it had been a basilisk. She heaved a soft sigh, and unwillingly departed.

Chun remained seated in the same position for some time; when, feeling angry with himself for thinking of a woman who was so forward, he hastily arose; and, perceiving that his ministers had left him, and he was quite alone, he took the paper off the ground.—

“It can be no harm,” said he, “to
“look on this? No, it were better
“that I should peruse it, I may meet
“with something to disgust and cure
“me of this strange, unwarrantable
“passion.”

It was some time before he dared to open it; when, glancing slightly over the first page, the name of Siling met his eye! He now acted like one beside himself: first he attempted to follow her—then he sat down—arose again, and paced the room with hurried step, saying—“Uncivilized
“barbarian as I am! That lovely
“female knows something of my Si-
“ling, and yet I treated her with
“rudeness and contempt. Ah! may
“not this book inform me what has
“befallen her, and where she is?”

He hastily concealed it in his bosom; and, calling for some one to conduct him to his chamber, made fast the door, and, with great emotion, read as follows:—

CHAP. IV.

“**I**N the fond hope that these characters will one day meet the eye of her dear father, poor Si-ling eagerly seizes every moment of solitude, thus to converse with her preserver and protector. Deprived of your beloved society, I have no pleasure but in thinking of you, and in practicing the lessons you taught me, every one of which brings comfort with it, but none so much as that grand lesson which you hourly inculcated—a resignation to the will of Tien. It is that supports me in my troubles; it is that enables me to form these characters

for your perusal; and it is that assures me we shall meet again!

“ Oh! what a sad transition from excess of joy to that of sorrow did I experience on the fatal night when last we parted! Scarcely had I entered my little harbour, when a stranger followed; and, gently seizing me, declared that I must go with him. I endeavoured to remonstrate, but in vain: he assured me that no harm should happen me, and that a lady was waiting to conduct me to the city. I entreated to see you, but he would not allow me: I then requested to leave some token of my love; that he would not suffer: I formed some characters upon the sand; but he, perceiving my intention, placed his foot upon, and extinguished them. I then rent my garments with my teeth, and

the air with my cries. He told me I could not be heard, for that his fellow slaves had orders to stun you with their mirth, and not to suffer you to leave your chamber before the sun arose. He then lifted me in his arms: my strugglings were vain; and, fearing you should think I was a willing wanderer, I used my utmost strength to force a lock of hair from off my head, and hung it on a plant, unseen by the destroyer of my happiness.

“The pain and horror which I felt at being forced to leave the only being whom I loved on earth, deprived my soul of energy: the trees seemed fading from my view, and I lost all recollection of the present and the past. When my reason returned to me, I found that I was seated in a moving harbour, and the strangest looking

thing beside me! I demanded what it was? It assured me that it was of the same sex and nature as myself: I could scarce believe it; for never did I see so strange a figure. Her eyes were small and sunken, her nose entirely flat, her mouth of an enormous size, and her black and greasy hair hanging like twisted snakes about her olive-coloured visage. She told me she had been my mother's nurse: this aroused my feelings, and I listened to her with attention.

“ She said my mother was the only daughter of Ki-ang-tse: that her father had designed to give her as a wife to the Emperor's first minister; but that, unknown to him, she loved her uncle Ho-ang-ti. Now this uncle was in reality no kin to her, his mother being the second wife of Ki-ang-tse's

father*, and Ho-ang-ti eight years old when she was married to him. Ki-ang-tse's daughter was at that time near six years old: Ho-ang-ti and she received instruction at the same time, and mutually vowed to love each other always. When the marriage with the minister was proposed to Li-chi, she was grief-struck; but, depending upon the love her father bore her, she earnestly entreated him not to sacrifice her at the shrine of ambition. 'As to the minister,' said she, 'I owe him great respect because he loves my father, but I can

* Two people of the same family cannot marry, or who bear the same name, though their relation is ever so distant; nor do the laws permit two brothers to marry two sisters, or a widower to marry his son to the daughter of the widow he intends to marry.

‘never feel a sentiment more tender
 ‘towards him. I have a horror for
 ‘every thing relating to the court,
 ‘and I would sooner die than be in
 ‘any way connected with it.’

“ ‘Foolish girl!’ replied her father,
 ‘you have marred your fortune and
 ‘your happiness: the Colao has over-
 ‘heard our conversation, and would
 ‘not, I am certain, marry a princess
 ‘who should once refuse him.’ ‘Then
 ‘I admire him,’ said my mother, ‘and
 ‘shall reverence and esteem him while
 ‘I have life.’

“Sometime after this Ki-ang-tse had
 a lameness which confined him to his
 room. Ho-ang-ti came to see his bro-
 ther, and Li-chi had an opportunity of
 telling him that a husband had been
 proposed to her. Ho-ang-ti was ex-
 tremely sorrowful; fearing that, when

others sued, her father might insist on her compliance. He was thoughtful, pondering how it would be best to act, when old Ning-chang (the nurse), who was present, advised him to prevent the possibility of her ever being another's by marrying her himself. They were young and innocent; she old and crafty: she soon overcame all their scruples, and they were married without ceremony.

“Ki-ang-tse's lameness continuing, Ho-ang-ti had frequent opportunities of being in company with Li-chi, and in removing, with the assistance of the nurse's son, a part of the partition that separated his chamber from the passage which led into the apartments of the women. After they had removed the wood-work, they fixed up in its stead a sort of curtain, of transparent stuff, so

artfully, that no one could observe the difference. Soon as Ho-ang-ti found that Li-chi was in a way to make a father of him, he determined to entrust the child to your care, himself intending to place it on the threshold of your hut. The mantle, on which was embroidered 'foster the friendless,' was his invention, and worked at his desire. He pleased himself with thinking how he would watch over you, and praise you for your care of heaven's foundling, intending, by degrees, to become fond of it himself, to appropriate a piece of ground for its support, and, in the end, adopt it: but all these resolutions were frustrated by death, the news of which so overcame my mother, that much she feared her death would follow, and so expose her shame.

“Your coming to her father's man-

sion was another grief to her; for, when she was delivered, to whom could she entrust her baby? Ning-chang advised her to prevail upon Ki-ang-tse to let you sleep in poor Ho-ang-ti's chamber, and that then she might contrive to speak to you through the transparent part of the wall; but, finding she could not summon sufficient courage to reveal her shame, she persuaded her father that every thing would go wrong at Ho-nan if you were not there to overlook the slaves. Complying with every wish of her's, he fixed the morning for your departure; and, the night preceding, I prematurely came into the world.

“Anxiety for the fate of me increased my mother's agonies; but the fertile invention of Ning-chang soothed, in some degree, her agitation. Cruel,

unfeeling old woman! how she laughed when she described the fright she had occasioned you, by calling on your name, and moving her flambeau along the transparent part of the partition. She thinks your fears prevented your following her at first, and takes great merit to herself for working on your feelings so successfully. She placed her light, she says, upon the inward spring of a long sliding stick, so that she could raise or sink it at her pleasure: that round the outward spring she placed sky-rockets, and, when she pushed it up to meet the light, they all went off together! She was charmed to find the strong effect this had on you; and, shaking me that I might make a noise, she squatted down: but I was obstinate, she said, and did not mind her, so that she was forced to pinch

me severely! On this I screamed aloud, and to her great delight you took me up and fed me. She now crawled along the hedge until she knew that you could not distinguish her, then hastened with the news of her success to my afflicted mother, who clasped her hands in thankfulness, raised her imploring eyes to Chang-ti*, and expired.

“ I had nearly expired also, the shock was so sudden, so violent. My reason certainly forsook me; for, when I found myself in a cold, miserable apartment, belonging to the son of Ning-chang, I could not at all remember how I came there. A swarthy looking girl was set to watch me; and, when she found my senses were returned, she left me.

* Heaven.

“ I had now leisure to ponder upon what had happened, and could not but acknowledge that I merited some part of my affliction, for my forgetfulness of you. Yes, my more than parent, I must confess the hope of seeing, for the first time, my mother, made me, in some degree, reconciled to our separation, for indeed I hoped my mother would find a way to reunite us—now every hope was lost.

“ In a few hours old Ning-chang entered: I was resolved she should not know my sentiments; therefore sat still, and spoke not. She was some time silent and confused: at length she said—‘ My dearest child, your blessed mother made me the guardian of your person. Your dear papa’s estate is sold to strangers, therefore no more a safe retreat for

‘you: nor is Chun, the ploughman, a
‘fit companion for the grandchild of
‘the Mandarin Ki-ang-tse.’ My heart
swelled with indignation, but I uttered
not a word. ‘You are lovely,’ she
continued, ‘very lovely; and I dare
‘say that my interest could procure
‘you to be made a concubine to our
‘great Emperor! Or, perhaps, the
‘Colao, if he was told who you are,
‘might marry you himself.’ ‘What?’
said I, ‘the man who wished to wed
‘my mother?’ ‘The same, my beauty.
‘He has never married yet; and, as
‘you are the very picture of your
‘mother, I dare say he would like
‘you. Now, I have been thinking
‘that he, perhaps, might tell your
‘surly grandfather who you are, and
‘then you would have all his mo-
‘ney, and, of course, handsomely

‘reward me for bringing it about, for
 ‘old Ki-ang-tse is a wretched miser;
 ‘and, although I have done him such
 ‘good service, and am still at his com-
 ‘mand, I do not think he means to
 ‘leave me one single tael. Now, my
 ‘sweetest love, if you will agree to
 ‘my proposals, I will conceal you in
 ‘your mother’s chamber till I can
 ‘bring these things about. Ki-ang-tse
 ‘has not had an hour’s health since
 ‘her departure, and has never once
 ‘entered her chamber, so that there
 ‘you will be safe.’

“My mother’s chamber! My heart
 beat sadly at the sound, yet it was an
 interesting place, and, as I saw resis-
 tance would be vain, I acquiesced in
 every thing, hoping to find a friend
 in the good minister, whom she had
 said my mother valued, and Ki-ang-tse

loved, but I entreated that she would not make him master of my mother's secret: that she had done already, and would have told it to Ki-ang-tse, but that she feared he would be angry, and discharge her. 'Though,' she continued, 'I was not to blame, 'because they loved each other; and, 'if I did persuade them to unite in 'secret, it was for their pleasure, not 'mine. I am sure I gained nothing 'by it but murmurings and upbraid- 'ings. I did expect they would have 'made me some handsome recom- 'pence, and so, perhaps, they might, 'if death had not overtaken them so 'soon. Now you, I hope, will not 'delay rewarding me as I deserve. It 'is probable that but for me you never 'had had existence: then think upon 'the pains it cost me to fix you in a

‘place of safety; and now, if I should
 ‘get you made the Emperor’s concu-
 ‘bine, or first wife to the grand
 ‘Colao, I think I shall deserve your
 ‘everlasting gratitude, and to be
 ‘made your confident and premier
 ‘governante.’

“My anger almost choaked me, yet I concealed it, lest she should change her plan; and I had hopes, through the grand Colao’s means, I should be soon restored to you: I therefore told her she might depend on meeting with the gratitude she merited from me. She appeared perfectly satisfied with this assurance; and, when it was entirely dark, conducted me to the apartments of her late mistress. Oh! how I trembled when I entered her chamber! The lanthorn which Ning-chang carried shewed me the bed on

which my hapless mother breathed her last sigh! By the side of it was a stool, and opposite stood a handsome cabinet: Ning-chang had stripped the room of every thing beside. I took the light and searched about in hopes of finding something which had been worn by my dear mother, but could see nothing except a black veil: I took it up; Ning-chang almost screamed—‘Pray put it down,’ said she, ‘till I am gone; then you may keep it if you please.’ and then she added, in a half whisper—‘I will tell you a story about that veil. Oh, I never was so frightened in all my life!

“ ‘I suppose that Chun, the ploughman, never taught you any thing about religion; but you must know, my love, that when we die our souls fly

‘out, and take up their abode within
 ‘the body of some bird or beast*, and
 ‘I do think the soul of your dear mo-
 ‘ther now animates a bat.’ I asked

* The bonzes (Chinese priests), though an illiterate set of men, have great power over the minds of the people, whom it is their interest to teach the doctrine of transmigration. The following story is related by a Christian Missionary, who, for his great skill in astronomy, was suffered to reside in China more than thirty years.

“Three bonzes were one day out on a religious-ramble, and, passing by the yard of a rich farmer, they saw three fine, fat, waddling ducks. They immediately set up such a terrible howling as brought the farmer out to see what was the matter. They told him that the souls of their fathers inhabited the bodies of his ducks, and that they should never rest in peace till they were able to purchase them of him. The farmer promised to take the greatest care of them, but that was not what they wanted; they beat their breasts, and appeared in the greatest agony; upon which the farmer presented them the

what led her to suppose so? and she replied—‘ My son being in great want of money one night, I came into this chamber (as I had often done before), to see if there was any thing of Li-chi’s that I could sell. I could find nothing but this veil; I snatched it up hastily, when something flew out, and hit me such a smart slap on the face, I think I feel it now. I was so frightened that I could not stir, and presently I heard it fluttering against the window. I then could see it plainly, and am certain it was a bat.’ ‘ But what makes you suppose

ducks, bidding them make themselves happy, for they should keep their relations in their own possession. They offered up prayers to Fo for the farmer’s prosperity, and scudded off with the ducks, made an excellent supper of them, and laughed at the credulity of the generous farmer.”

‘it was the spirit of my mother?’
‘Because it was exactly like the slap
‘she gave me when I endeavoured to
‘console her a few moments before
‘you were born. But I must leave
‘you, love; so take these dried fruits,
‘and this little flask of rice wine, and
‘I will be with you in the morning.’
I begged to have the light, but she
refused; and, fastening too the door,
left me to my meditations, which were
melancholy indeed.

“I sunk upon the bed, and wept
myself into a sleep, from which I
was awakened by something crawling
over my face: I pushed it with my
hand, heard it fall upon the floor,
and pad along: I presently felt se-
veral of them running over my body;
and, by their size and smooth skin,
I judge that they were rats, attracted

by the smell of the dried fruits, which Ning-chang had laid upon the bed. I shuddered from head to foot; and, taking the stool and fruit, I groped along until I reached the cabinet, which, with difficulty, I climbed, and seated myself upon the top. I was fearful that the rats would reach me even there; so, taking out the veil, which I had folded and placed within my bosom, I wrapped it round my head, and, crossing it behind, brought the corners back to each temple, where I fastened them with the large diamond bodkins you had given me on the night we parted, letting the veil fall at its full length over my face and body.

“ I had not long been seated when I heard the door of the chamber creak

on its hinges, and saw an amazing tall figure enter: it was habited in white; it had a melancholy aspect, and the head was quite transparent. It approached the bed, and called aloud 'Si-ling! Si-ling! Si-ling! as you value the repose of your departed mother, be kind to Ning-chang. Foster her as if she was your parent, and give her whatever you can spare from your allowance; nor then think that you have done enough, for she deserves your kindest love and tenderest affection.'

At first I was extremely agitated and afraid, but soon I recollected that the voice was Ning-chang's; and, shocked to find so much duplicity and wickedness, I groaned aloud. On this she turned around, and, in seeming agony,

exclaimed, 'O mi to Fo*!' I fancied that the diamonds upon the black veil must shine like two large eyes, and that it was them which had alarmed her; I therefore shook my head: she dropped upon her knees, and, pressing her forehead against the earth, the lanthorn fell from off her head, and set itself on fire. I, fearing that she would be burnt, jumped from the cabinet. On this she hastily arose; and, without looking back, shut the door after her, and fled. The paper lanthorn was presently consumed, but still the lamp remained: of this I was extremely glad; and, reaching down the fruit and wine, I comfortably re-

* An exclamation much used by the worshippers of the idol Fo, or Foe, and resembles our "Oh, Lord, have mercy!"

galed myself without the fear of the rats.

“Soon as the sun arose, I searched around the chamber; and, finding nothing that could interest me, I tried the door: to my surprise and joy it opened: I now wrapped the veil around me, and wandered forth I knew not whither.

“I passed through several courts and halls, and at last came to a large door, which I opened, and, descending a flight of steps, entered a most delicious garden.

“Here I could not help reflecting on the many dear delights of which my hapless mother had deprived herself by one false step! I wept too for myself; wandering, friendless, and affrighted, in the palace of my grand-

sire, whose drooping age I might have comforted, had but my parents acted with discretion. But soon I checked these murmurings of my heart—‘Had ‘it been so,’ said I, ‘I never might ‘have known the worthy Chun, nor ‘have been taught to worship the ‘great Tien. Oh, Providence! I acknowledge thy wisdom, and yield ‘myself entirely to thy will.’

“I now wandered onward through a winding path, shaded by tall and sweetly-smelling trees, till I discovered the building to which it led. I stopped to gaze upon it: its figure was triangular: the golden tiles shone through the green foliage, which had climbed up to the summit, and, on a nearer view, the choicest flowers had entwined themselves around these

evergreens, and, with their fragrant odours, perfumed the air.

“ I ascended the white marble steps, determining to ask protection of the happy inmates: tapped softly at the door, and it yielded to the touch. I soon found it was by accident that it was open, a small pebble having prevented its entirely closing; and, whoever had entered or departed last, had shot the lock without perceiving it.

“ I listened to hear if any one was stirring—all was silent. At last I summoned up resolution, and pushed the door wide upon its hinges. I was ready to sink upon observing a great number of officers, soldiers, saddle-horses, camels, tortoises, and other animals, in different attitudes, with

signs of grief and veneration in their aspects. But, regarding them some time with fixed attention, I found they must be made of wood or stone, as they stirred not, neither did they seem to breathe.

“ I had now courage to gaze all over the chamber, around which were ranged what, from the description I had received from you, I conjectured to be coffins. Over each was suspended a rich canopy, and a portrait of the deceased; and, between each, stood the officers, beasts, &c. as I before described. In the middle of the hall were three of the same shape, but much more beautiful, the canopies being richly embroidered and fringed, and large tassels fastened to the corners.

“ That which stood directly in the

middle was made of violet-coloured stuff, embroidered with gold: that on the left hand embroidered with black, white, and silver; and the one nearest me was made entirely of white, and had no portrait over it. My curiosity urged me on until I reached this coffin: it had no lid, but in it were placed a bed and pillow, of white serge. I now cast my eyes upon the portrait that was raised above the purple dome. It was of a young and lovely female; her eyes seemed fixed on mine, and her half open mouth seemed to express a pleasure at beholding me. It was long before I could withdraw my attention from this most fascinating countenance; and, when I did, it was but to learn her name. Judge of my surprise and agitation, when I beheld, in characters of gold—

“LI-CHI,
 LOVING,
 DEARLY-BELOVED,
 AND
 ONLY DAUGHTER
 OF THE
 MANDARIN KI-ANG-TSE.”

“I had no command over my feelings, for I wept and beat my breast; and, laying my head upon the coffin which contained the cold remains of her whose death my birth occasioned, I made the roof re-echo: but, when this violence of grief subsided, I threw myself upon my knees, and fervently implored a pardon for myself and parents, and that we all might meet in the bright realms of everlasting happiness. Comforted with the assurance, I arose; and, after contemplating the almost animated portrait of Li-chi, I

turned my eyes to that on the left hand—it was

“CAS-TI,
FIRST WIFE
OF THE
MANDARIN KI-ANG-TSE.”

“I now walked around, and examined the whole range of portraits, nor stopped until I came to Li-hou-tse, Ki-ang-tse’s second wife. The portrait next to her’s was of her son Ho-ang-ti. The aspect was so manly, so benevolent, that I gazed upon it with admiration; and, considering it as my father, and the kind friend of Chun, I involuntarily fell upon my knees to ask its blessing. I remained in this position until night closed in, and a sensation, resembling fear, assailed my spirits. I arose, and making fast the door, approached the coffin of my mother: I raised my hands

and eyes unto her portrait: it seemed to smile upon me, and I imagined that the great Tien would allow her to be my protecting angel. I hope the thought was not presumptuous; I trust it was not, for it gave a comfort to my heart that I cannot describe. At the right side of the empty coffin was placed a stool, covered with white serge, and a large mat, made of rushes. I was going to lay me down upon the mat, but the fear of rats restrained me: I then stepped upon the stool, and got within side of the empty coffin: the bed and pillow were extremely soft, and soon I sunk into a profound sleep.

“ My dreams were sweetly pleasant, for they were of you. I thought that I had found my way to your most happy dwelling: that you received me with excessive joy, and

pressed my hands close to your lips. I felt a rapture such as in my waking hours I never knew, and, though excess of joy dissolved the charm, yet still I felt the pressure of a hand, nor could persuade myself that it was but a dream. Again I closed my eyes, endeavouring to recollect each circumstance of this delightful vision, when presently a warm tear fell on my face: I started, and beheld a venerable figure, habited in white.

“ ‘ Be not afraid,’ said he, ‘ sweet
‘ child—thou canst not be more safe :
‘ thy clay-cold neighbour once was
‘ as lovely, and as innocent as thou
‘ art ; and, had not the breath of
‘ heaven ceased to attune her soft
‘ melodious voice, she would speak
‘ words of consolation to thee, for she
‘ was goodness self ! Yes, Li-chi, it

'is the sole comfort of thy lonely
 'father to remember thy duteous love,
 'and that thou wouldest not deviate
 'from virtue's strictest rules, even to
 'gain a diadem!'

"There could no blame attach to
 me for my poor mother's fault, and
 yet I felt a crimson glow suffuse my
 cheek, and my heart beat as though
 it would burst its prison. 'Oh! I
 inwardly ejaculated, 'who would rob
 'thee of thy only joy? What fiend
 'so cruel as to whisper, thy daughter
 'was not chaste!'

"He stood some time contemplating
 my features, and then said—'Thou art
 'so like her, love, that one would think
 'the grave was grown prolific, and had
 'produced a lovely flower, the exact
 'counterpart of that which it received
 'into its icy bosom! Who art thou,

‘sweetest child?’ I told him that I was an helpless orphan, dropped in the streets: that she who claimed a right to my obedience was unworthy, and of principles so bad, that much I feared she meant to traffick with my honour; that I had therefore wandered from her, hoping to meet with some one who would suffer me to work, and live in innocence.

“ ‘Had I not made a solemn vow,’ Ki-ang-tse said, ‘never to let another fill the place of Li-chi, I would adopt thee, for thou dost please me much.’ He seemed thoughtful for some time, and then said—‘I have a great and good friend, to him I will recommend thee, for he has power to place thee in a situation suited to the delicacy of thy sex.’ I would have embraced his knees, but he prevented me, and pressed

me to his heart. 'What makes me
 'love thee so?' said he; 'I could al-
 'most fancy that I was young again,
 'and that thou wert my own sweet,
 'lovely child! But I forget that thou
 'must need refreshment: stay here,
 'sweet girl, and I will bring thee
 'some.' He then fastened the door
 after him, and departed. I now seated
 myself upon the stool, and reflected
 on my fate with some degree of com-
 fort, for I was under the protection
 of my grandsire, and could not help
 believing myself to be a favourite
 child of providence; for, surely, all
 these great events were brought about
 by his unerring hand.

"In a short time Ki-ang-tse re-
 turned. 'I come to take my break-
 'fast with thee, love,' said he, 'for
 'what is man without society?' I

thanked him for his goodness in the best terms my heart could dictate, but he insisted that it was he who was obliged. ‘You interest my feelings, love,’ said he, ‘and the hope of being serviceable to thee has lent a new spring to my existence.’

“Soon as we had ended our repast he left me; and, in the evening, returned with the grand Colao, who promised to procure for me a situation in the suite of the Empress; and, soon as night closed in, I put on the robe which he had brought for me, and walked with him to his palace. On the way I thought of you, and the instructions you had given me; I remembered to have heard you say, that they were undeserving of protection who would endeavour to deceive their benefactor,

and, therefore, I determined to acquaint the Colao with my unhappy birth, and happy education. Soon as we entered his palace he consigned me to the care of the female slaves, but I entreated first to speak with him in private: he closed the door; I humbly enquired if he knew Ning-chang, Ki-ang-tse's female overseer. He gazed on me for some time in great emotion, and then said—'You are the daughter of unhappy Li-chi! I see you are. Poor innocent! and hadst thou resolution to keep the secret from thy grandsire, who could have given thee a protection the most splendid?'

I told him that I feared the disclosure of his daughter's crime would make him wretched: he applauded my forbearance, and demanded how I had

learned so much discretion? I described you, and the advantages which I had reaped under your kind tuition. He seemed astonished and delighted: told me that at some future time I should relate to him all that I knew of your inventions and improvements, for that, since he found I was related to the good Ki-ang-tse, my place of destination should be changed: instead of being an attendant upon the Empress, I should be made the daughter of his adoption.

“ I told him that I should ever feel grateful for the honour and kindness which he offered me, but humbly begged that he would send me back to you. He said, that since your cruel parents were become masters of the estate (as he had been informed by Ning-chang that they were), you could

not now protect me: that he would seize the earliest opportunity of bringing you to court, for that it would be disgraceful to the nation if talents such as yours should perish in obscurity. This assurance cheered my heart; and, in some measure, reconciled me to my fate.

CHAP. V.

“I now spent my mornings (the weather being very cold) in rearing silk-worms in the house, and my evenings were employed in listening to the instructions of the Colao, and in conversing of you, a subject extremely gratifying to us both. We had passed some months in this manner, when the Colao received a message from the Empress, signifying that she had been informed he had a daughter, and she should feel herself highly offended if that daughter was not allowed to come to her palace, and receive instruction with the Emperor’s sisters, and other ladies of the court.

“ This sadly grieved the minister.
 ‘ What can she mean by it?’ said he.
 ‘ No good, I fear. She knows my strong
 ‘ abhorrence of her principles; and, I
 ‘ am certain, in her heart despises me,
 ‘ and would be glad to do me a secret
 ‘ injury: yet I must not offend her by
 ‘ refusing. I would resign all state
 ‘ affairs, and go into retirement, but for
 ‘ the people’s sake; for, well I know,
 ‘ that she so absolutely reigns within
 ‘ the heart of my poor brother, our in-
 ‘ fatuated Emperor, she soon would
 ‘ banish virtue entirely from her seat,
 ‘ if I was not at hand to thwart her
 ‘ wicked views.’

“ ‘ Perhaps,’ said I, ‘ she now repents
 ‘ of her misdeeds; wishes to obtain
 ‘ your friendship, and profit by your
 ‘ counsel.’ ‘ I will suppose so too,’ said
 he, ‘ for I must yield; but, oh, I will

‘ watch her closely, and never will I
 ‘ let thee dwell one night within the
 ‘ palace. I shall inform the Emperor
 ‘ my reason for adopting thee was, that
 ‘ my ill health wanted the chearful so-
 ‘ ciety of a female so well instructed as
 ‘ I found you to be, and that my
 ‘ evenings would be miserable without
 ‘ you.’ I thanked him for his good-
 ness, and was highly delighted with the
 idea of being introduced to a society of
 females.

“ At length the day, the important
 day, was fixed. The Colao sent me
 many patterns, that I might choose my
 dress. I wished it to be plain, but he
 informed me his rank demanded it
 should be embroidered: I therefore
 choose a pale sky colour, and bordered
 it lightly with silver.

“ When my dress was finished, oh,

how I longed for the hour of presentation! but, when the day arrived, my spirits sunk, and my heart beat sadly. I concealed my agitation from the kind Colao, until he parted from me at the entrance of the palace, I then clung round his arm, and wept.

“I was conducted through several courts and halls, and at last folding doors were thrown open, and discovered to my astonished eyes the Empress! I had pictured her more odious and deformed than Ning-chang: judge then of my surprise when I beheld a female the most enchanting! Her mouth small, eyes languishing and lovely, and her whole countenance irradiated by an ineffable smile of sweetness. She was covered with a loose robe, of bright sun-colour, richly ornamented with jewels of amazing brightness. In short

her dress and person were so directly contrary to those my fancy had invented, that I was almost petrified with wonder, and stood some minutes before I could collect myself sufficiently to make the reverences I had been taught. She saw my great embarrassment, and, in the softest tone of voice, desired me to approach her.

“ ‘Oh, pardon me,’ said I, ‘great lady, for I was lost in wonder and in admiration! I have never, until this hour, seen any being of my own sex save one, and she was old and horrible to look upon. But thou, lady, oh, surely thou art the great Tien’s masterpiece!’ I then bowed my forehead to the earth: she desired me to arise, made me sit near herself, and treated me with every fond attention, every winning kindness.

“ When I again reached the palace of my new father, I tripped lightly to his apartment. ‘ Thy countenance, ‘ my child,’ said he, ‘ informs me thou ‘ art pleased.’ ‘ Oh, sir! give not the ‘ sensation which I feel an appellation ‘ so inanimate: I am delighted, enraptured!’ ‘ I am sorely grieved to hear ‘ thee say so,’ he replied; ‘ that vile ‘ enchantress has bewitched thee:’ ‘ Oh, say not so, great sir: you have ‘ been misinformed concerning her; ‘ she cannot be a guilty creature such ‘ as you described.’ ‘ I wish,’ said he, ‘ sincerely wish, that thou couldest ‘ prove I am mistaken in her. But ‘ sit ye down, my Si-ling, and tell ‘ me how you were received.’

“ I then described my own embarrassment, and the great condescension of the Empress, repeating every word

of the fine compliment I paid her, at which he really laughed. It was, he said, the grossest piece of flattery he ever heard, and shewed the weakness and the vanity of her who could be pleased with it: ‘but you
 ‘are not to blame, my love, your
 ‘tongue but uttered what your heart
 ‘prompted. Continue to think well
 ‘of her so long as she will suffer
 ‘thee, for it may have a good effect.
 ‘If she is pleased with thy good
 ‘opinion, she may endeavour to de-
 ‘serve it.’

“It fell out just as the wise minister had predicted. She was pleased with me, and with the high opinion which I entertained of her amazing virtues; so much, that never once in all the thirty months I passed at court, did I behold her in a passion, or see

her act the least unbecoming the high character for which I so admired her. True, she would sometimes absent herself for many days, and then the ladies said old Cong-zi had got hold of her.

“In one of these absences the oldest lady in her suite took me aside, and said she was desired to express thanks, in the name of all the ladies, for that the Empress was another woman since I came to court: that she kept her temper within bounds, and that they did not know of one murder she had been guilty of in all that time. At the word murder, I shuddered. ‘I know you have discretion,’ said the old lady, ‘and I will tell you. Before you came to court, scarce a week passed but some unhappy creature fell a victim to her

‘rage: aye, and worse than that;
‘you know Nan-si?’ ‘I do; and love
‘her too,’ said I, ‘and often am I
‘grieved that she should be employed
‘in such mean offices.’ ‘Aye, and
‘she is kindly treated now to what
‘she was before you came to court;
‘and, would you think it (she whis-
‘pered and looked around), Nan-si is
‘the Emperor’s own daughter!’ ‘Im-
‘possible!’ said I. ‘Hush! It would
‘ruin her and me if it was known
‘that I had told you,’ said the old
lady. ‘Sacrifices had been repeatedly
‘offered to the God of Pregnancy,
‘praying that the great Emperor might
‘be blessed with children. At last it
‘was reported that one of his concu-
‘bines was in a situation likely to
‘produce an heir. This caused great
‘joy to all, except the wicked Em-

‘press, who pretended sickness, that
 ‘she might not shew herself in her
 ‘true colours to the Emperor. At
 ‘length poor little Nan-si came into
 ‘the world. Her mother was a pat-
 ‘tern of meekness and humility, and
 ‘so beloved by all the women, that
 ‘the vile Empress found it difficult
 ‘to make an end of her, but she at
 ‘last effected it by a slow poison.
 ‘Since then the daughter has been
 ‘the object of her hatred. Oh, I have
 ‘often seen her,’ continued the old
 lady, ‘when the poor child had been
 ‘an hour employed upon her knees,
 ‘washing the feet of her unjust tor-
 ‘mentor, kick her from off the steps
 ‘which mounted to her seat, and, be-
 ‘fore she could raise herself, the gol-
 ‘den bason followed, with its con-
 ‘tents. Not one of us dared to

‘ take the part of this ill-treated girl,
 ‘ but all were forced to smile, al-
 ‘ though our smiles, not coming from
 ‘ the heart, were ghastly.’

After this, I paid particular attention to Nan-si, who really appeared spirit-broken, but I could not believe all the vile stories which were told of the enchanting Empress, who, in my eyes, was the most amiable and lovely of nature's works. About this time Ki-ang-tse, my dear grandfather, fell sick. I had often seen him, and he continued to feel for me so lively an affection, that, when he found the disorder was likely to confine him for some time, he requested the Colao would spare me to him, for that he found great comfort in my company and conversation.

“ Ning-chang” was in the chamber

when I entered: I drew my veil close, a precaution I always used when she was present, hoping by that to avoid being known by her; and, as she appeared to take no notice of me, I thought I had succeeded. One evening when the Colao was present, and Ki-ang-tse felt himself so much recovered as to sit up on his couch, he addressed the minister in these words:—

‘In gratitude to the great Tien for
 ‘this hour’s relief from pain, I will
 ‘employ it for the good of my poor
 ‘fellow-creatures. As I have no child
 ‘to inherit my large property (and he
 ‘sighed bitterly) I will leave the bulk
 ‘of it to build an hospital, for——’
 the chamber door burst open, and
 Ning-chang entered like a fury!—
 ‘Build an hospital?’ she repeated;
 ‘What, and leave your own grand-

‘child not a leang, even to pay the
‘debts she owes to me?’

“ I looked confused, and frightened ;
the Colao surprised, and angry ; but
the unsuspecting Ki-ang-tse regarded
her with a look full of compassion.
‘ Poor thing, poor thing ! ’ said he,
‘ the fear of losing me has turned
‘ her brain.’ ‘ Turned her brain,’ she
repeated ; ‘ it is enough, I think, when
‘ she sees you about to act so madly.
‘ I am, and always have been, your
‘ greatest friend, and yet you never have
‘ consulted me in any business of im-
‘ portance. But for me you never
‘ would have had a grandchild to do
‘ honour to your memory.’ The Colao
endeavoured to make her leave the
room, and Ki-ang-tse, seeing that I
wept and trembled, kindly said—‘ Be
‘ not alarmed, love, she will not hurt

‘ thee: it is thy likeness to my de-
‘ parted daughter, whom she nursed,
‘ that causes her disordered fancy to
‘ think thou art her child. ‘ Nay,’
said the struggling Ning-chang, ‘ this
‘ is enough to turn the brain of a phi-
‘ losopher! I tell you once again she
‘ is the daughter of Li-chi, and of
‘ your brother-in-law Ho-ang-ti.’

“ Conviction seemed to flash upon his mind like lightning, and it is impossible to describe the horror that was pictured on his countenance. He endeavoured to conquer his feelings, but they overcame him, and he sunk back upon his couch in a fit so strong, we felt assured it would terminate his inoffensive life. The Colao ordered the slaves to bind the cruel Ning-chang, declaring, if Ki-ang-tse died, her life should answer for it.

“ It was long before he recovered; when, casting a mournful look at Ning-chang—‘Cruel, cruel woman!’ he mildly said, ‘thou hast robbed me of my
 ‘ sweetest hope; that of meeting with
 ‘ my child, my only child, in the de-
 ‘ lightful palace of eternal happiness!
 ‘ Oh, is it possible that Li-chi could
 ‘ do any thing to forfeit her title to a
 ‘ seat of bliss? she who appeared all
 ‘ purity and goodness?’

“ The Colao endeavoured to comfort him by saying—‘ I hope her peni-
 ‘ tential sufferings made some atonement
 ‘ for a fault occasioned by love, extreme
 ‘ youth, and a bad counsellor; and, as
 ‘ her life paid the forfeit of her crime,
 ‘ I hope and trust she is forgiven.’
 ‘ How?’ said the agitated Ki-ang-tse,
 ‘ did her life pay the forfeit?’ ‘ It did,’
 replied the minister; ‘ she died in giv-

‘ing birth to Si-ling!’ Ki-ang-tse wrung his hands, and wept. ‘Terrible, terrible!’ said he. Oh, Li-chi! my unhappy child! But where is Si-ling? ‘I hear her sad convulsive sobs; pray bring her near me, that I may bless her. Yes, I will bless thee while I have life,’ said he; ‘for nature pleaded for thee at the tomb of thy poor mother.’ He tenderly embraced me; then took the hand of the Colao, and pressed it to his heart, saying—‘How happy I had been if Li-chi had accepted thee, and thou hadst been the father of this lovely child: I should have gloried to acknowledge her: but now the world—No, the world must never know she is the offspring of my Li-chi. Here,’ said he, writing quickly, ‘here you will find yourself possessed of all that I am worth:

‘ make use of it for Si-ling, but never
 ‘ tell the world she is the offspring
 ‘ of my Li-chi.’

“ ‘ And what am I to have for keep-
 ‘ ing this great secret?’ cried the un-
 feeling Ning-chang. ‘ Death!’ said the
 minister. ‘ Oh, no,’ replied Ki-ang-tse,
 ‘ let her punishment be to live, and to
 ‘ reflect upon her wickedness. Poor,
 ‘ foolish woman! had I not known thy
 ‘ crime, I should have left thee silver
 ‘ sufficient to have passed the remnant
 ‘ of thy days in ease and comfort:
 ‘ but, since I find thou hast abused the
 ‘ confidence I placed in thee, and de-
 ‘ stroyed the happiness of me and mine,
 ‘ a bare subsistence, and a dark, solitary
 ‘ chamber, is all that I bequeath thee.’

“ ‘ Then I will blast thy daughter’s
 ‘ character to all the world!’ said she.
 ‘ Poor, wicked woman, thou wilt not

‘ have the power. Here, slaves, bear
 ‘ her to the prison-house: let her have
 ‘ neither light nor sustenance, except
 ‘ boiled rice and unpolluted water—
 ‘ bear her away!’

“ ‘ May disease cling to thy bones,
 ‘ and despair gnaw thy heart,’ said she:
 ‘ may tortures rack thy ——’

“ ‘ Cease thy bitter wishes,’ said
 the minister; ‘ the curses of the wicked
 ‘ fall upon themselves—bear her away,
 ‘ and may every treacherous servant
 ‘ be so punished.’ She would have
 continued to curse, but the slaves fix-
 ed an instrument of silence upon her
 lips; and, happy to be rid of such an
 overseer, rejoiced when sentence was
 pronounced against her; exulted over
 her, and bore her off with smiles of
 pleasure in their countenances.

“ ‘ Her base ingratitude,’ said Ki-

ang-tse, 'wounds me to the heart. It
'grieves me too that I should die in
'anger with a creature who has for
'fifty years eaten my bread, and slept
'secure beneath my roof. I had an
'excellent opinion of her; trusted her
'with my dearest treasure, and she
'despoiled it of its brightest orna-
'ment. Cruel woman! how could she
'so injure a little creature who, hav-
'ing lost her natural instructress, looked
'up to her for counsel. Oh, beauteous
'Li-chi! even now thy father recollects
'thy infant goodness, and the sweet
'hopes he entertained of having thy
'society to cheer the heavy hours of
'drooping age; but one false step robbed
'him of fifteen years of happiness, and
'thee of every comfort here, and every
'hope of bliss hereafter.' He now wept
until his eyes seemed bursting. The

minister tried every means to comfort him, but still he wept, until he fell into a sleep that lasted long, and, after which, he seemed to have forgotten all that had passed, nor ever mentioned Li-chi but with extacy, calling her sweet saint, and promising to join her so soon as he could rid himself of the great lump of clay that held him fast, and would not let him mount so high. Sometimes we fancied he was not in his perfect mind, but he appeared quite happy, and, in four days, resigned his breath with as much ease as a young baby resigns itself to sleep.

“The Colao feared Ning-chang’s story would gain credit in the world if I wore mourning for Ki-ang-tse, he therefore recommended my return to court immediately, as the ladies were lamenting my absence, and the Empress

had returned to her old practices; but I so earnestly entreated I might be allowed to give one month to solitude, and the memory of my grandfather, that the Colao consented, and, during that time, the Empress swallowed poison.

“ Her chief eunuch went to the purveyor's to order a particular sort of wine: a jocose old clerk recommended some, which he said was strong enough even for the Empress's own private drinking. This the eunuch told to her, with some exaggerations, and the old man was ordered to stand before the presence. He endeavoured to excuse himself by saying it was a standing joke of his, and that scarce a day passed but he had an opportunity of repeating it two or three times: that he really believed the ladies he had laughed at

were not guilty of tippling, as, not one of them, except the Empress, had taken umbrage at his joke.

“ This inuendo so exasperated her, that she ordered his head to be struck off immediately, and would have been obeyed, had not the minister interposed to save him; upon which she turned her rage on him, and would have poisoned him, but that the Emperor, knowing his worth, and how the people loved him, feared to comply with her request. Never before had she met with opposition from her husband; and, to revenge herself upon him, she drank the poison, even to the dregs!— Soon as she felt the dreadful workings she sent for me.

“ I found her kneeling at the feet of Nan-si, and her head resting on her lap. Soon as her agonies would

suffer her to speak, she acknowledged to the Emperor the unkindness she had used towards this unoffending child, whose mother she had despatched by small doses of the same deadly water. ‘But her agonies,’ she continued, ‘were light compared to those I suffer. She felt such love for all her fellow creatures, that in her dying moments she blessed and prayed for them; I cannot pray, even for myself. I have believed in transmigration (or that the soul died with the body), would I could believe so now: but, oh! too sure I am there is a God of justice; him I dread to meet; for, were he even more merciful than Si-ling pictures him, he could not pardon such a wretch as I am.’

“She then tore her flesh, and ren-

dered her once lovely countenance horrible to look upon. The Emperor wept and wrung his hands: she seized him by the arm, crying—‘Take warning by my wretched end!’ and then she added, in a hurried tone—‘Do all the good thou canst—make every reparation in thy power—distribute all thy wealth among the indigent—too late I find there is no treasure worth preserving save virtuous principles. Si-ling, I see that thou dost pity me; pray for me. Thy petitions will be heard: had I been blessed in early life with such a friend as thee, I should not thus have perished; but, from my childhood till this fatal day, my forward will has never been opposed.’

“She continued in this raving state for many days, never more calm, but oftentimes more frantic, beating herself

against the ground, and declaring that the ghosts of those she had destroyed were feeding on her entrails. At length her tortured soul resigned itself to its all-powerful Maker! Her dying shrieks were frightfully terrific; and, soon as life had fled, the body became so putrid that her attendants were forced to fly as from a pestilence: all, save the Emperor, who remained grief-struck and motionless. It was by force that they removed him: he vowed to shun society, and reprobated the Colao as the cause of this catastrophe.

“ He confined himself to his chamber for three months, at the end of which time he called a court, and ordered the grand Colao to attend. The minister imagined that reason and virtue had resumed their seat, and that the Emperor was going to distribute alms;

but no! he found him surrounded by his servile courtiers, who had introduced a stranger, the inventor of a liquor which he called the water of immortality. The Emperor ordered the minister to advance; then, in a tone of keen reproach and trembling exultation, said—‘With thy breath thou
 ‘ didst destroy thy master’s happiness,
 ‘ hoping, no doubt, to send him broken-
 ‘ hearted to the tomb, that thou might-
 ‘ est fill his seat, but thou shalt never
 ‘ have the dignity thou aimest at; and,
 ‘ to make thy disappointment sharp as
 ‘ it can be, thou shalt present to him
 ‘ the draught which will prolong his
 ‘ life to all eternity.’

“The Colao bowed; then took the small gold bason from the stranger’s hand, bent his knee on the last step of the throne, and his head to the Em-

peror's feet, then raised the bason and his eyes towards Chang-ti for some minutes, slowly moved them downwards, and eagerly swallowed the contents! The enraged courtiers seized, and would have strangled him, but the Emperor declared his own hand should send him to the shades. 'Strike!' said the collected minister, 'but if the liquor I have drunk possessè's virtues such as you describe, you have no power over my life. Strike! and behold my perishable body fall senseless at your feet: I shall account my life well lost: it will convince my royal brother he has wronged me, and put him on his guard against those flatterers who rob him of his reason, and the people of his fatherly protection.'

"The sycophants were abashed, and the Emperor extremely moved; he in-

stantly broke up the court: the Colao would have remained, but he waved his hand as if he wished his absence also, then retired to his chamber, where, on the morrow, he ordered his brother to attend him.

“The Emperor held out his hand, and said—‘You have forced me to look
 ‘in upon myself—all is dark and hor-
 ‘rible—reflect upon the past I dare not,
 ‘nor can I now raise my heavy heart
 ‘to perform such acts as would make
 ‘some atonement to my injured people,
 ‘and therefore am resolved to resign
 ‘the reigns of government into your
 ‘hands.’

“‘Great sir,’ replied the minister,
 ‘I am unworthy of the post you offer
 ‘me; and, were it otherwise, my ill
 ‘health would not allow me to exert
 ‘myself sufficiently to govern this vast

‘ empire: but, since your majesty is
‘ pleased to retire from the toils of state,
‘ and to appoint a wise and equitable
‘ successor, I no of no one so capable,
‘ and so deserving, as a young husband-
‘ man, whose name is Chun. He is a
‘ man who has studied much, but his
‘ knowledge of many of the sciences he
‘ must have gained by inspiration. He
‘ has a quick sense of feeling, yet does
‘ he patiently submit to the most cruel
‘ and unnatural treatment from his pa-
‘ rents. Possessed of talents which
‘ would insure him affluence, yet does
‘ he humbly consider them another’s
‘ property, nor has once endeavoured
‘ to emancipate himself from his in-
‘ glorious slavery. Let that great act
‘ be yours, most mighty sir: your peo-
‘ ple will adore you for it! He will
‘ be happy to profit by your experi-

‘ence; will preserve those laws already
 ‘instituted, and adopt any wise mea-
 ‘sures which retirement will furnish
 ‘you with leisure to form: you will
 thus doubly benefit your country,
 ‘and will be called the father of the
 ‘people.’

“The Emperor was delighted with this proposal; felt interested for you, requested to hear all the Colao knew concerning you, and, in the end, sent for you to the court. Through the contrivance of the kind minister, I saw your first interview with the Emperor: you, and only you, can judge what were my feelings! now I hourly hope to meet, and to converse with you. Oh, my preserver, my more than father, how will this long absence endear us to each other?

“At length the happy day is come!

in the evening I shall be with you: can there be any bliss on earth to equal that? I am sure the meeting will cause both you and I a sleepless night, I will therefore put this manuscript within my bosom, it will amuse you."

"Lovely, lovely Si-ling!" he exclaimed, "so grown, and so accomplished that thy fond father knew thee not. True, his heart recognized thee, and would love thee, spite of his reason. Glorious Tien! how incapable is man of judging what would be happiest for himself: that event which I considered as the greatest evil that could befall a finite being (the deprivation of the only creature whose heart beat in unison with his), that event, in which my bounded view could not espy one gleam of consolation, thy

“ wonder-working hand hast made the
“ cause of a felicity so rare, and so
“ transcendent, that the most ambi-
“ tious mortal could not have had
“ temerity to ask it of thee. What
“ have I done to merit such high honour
“ and such bliss, that thou shouldest
“ give to me the means of making
“ millions happy, and bless me with
“ a lovely, chearful partner, who,
“ sweetly participating in my raptures,
“ will make their zest most exquisite!
“ Oh! if ever I should prove ungrate-
“ ful, make me a terrible example of
“ thine anger.”

CHAP. VI.

FINDING the night was not more than half spent, he again perused the little history of Si-ling; and, soon after the sun had arisen, the grand Colao requested to be admitted. Chun took his hand, and, pressing it against his bosom, said—"Words cannot convey to you any idea of the gratitude that thrills this heart! It wishes to express its feelings, but finds that language is too poor. You have preserved for it a treasure without which life, and all its glittering prospects, would be tasteless and gloomy. Her loved society shall animate it to perform such deeds as will be satisfactory to you,

“ and to the great master of the world !

“ Oh, bring me to my Si-ling !”

“ Not yet,” replied the minister.

“ I perceive love is a passion which you

“ have not learned to rule. Restrain

“ this extacy, and reason with yourself :

“ if you are willing to espouse her, and

“ she is willing to accept of thee, in

“ twenty days the ceremony may be

“ performed : till then you must not

“ see her.” Chun bowed himself, and,

heaving a short sigh, unwillingly ac-

quiesced.

“ On the morning of the twentieth

day they carried to the eastern gate of

the palace a kind of table, on which

they put four pillars at the four corners,

and on these pillars a dome. This port-

able house was adorned with yellow

silk, and other embellishments. At the

hour appointed they placed on the same

table a small, neat book, wherein was written the compliment that was composed for the Emperor: there were also written therein the names of the princes, grandees, and those of the supreme courts, that came in a body to perform this ceremony. Some of the mandarins, habitted according to their office, took up this table, and went forward: all the princes of the blood, and great men, placed according to their rank, waited near one of the inner gates of the palace: the other great officers, such as the prime minister, the highest degree of doctors, the presidents of the supreme courts, and the other mandarins, all magnificently clad, according to their degree, followed the table on foot: several musical instruments made a concert very agreeable to the Chinese, and the drums and trumpets

were heard from different parts of the palace.

“ They began the procession; and, when they were near the gate called Ou-muen, the princes joined the rest, and placed themselves at their head: then they walked together as far as the great hall of audience. When they were entered the hall, they took from off the portable table the compliment, and placed it on another table, appointed for that purpose, in the middle of the great hall of audience. All being ranged in handsome order, made their usual reverence before the imperial throne, as if his majesty had been there himself; that is to say, every one standing up in their proper places, they first fell upon their knees, struck their foreheads three times against the ground, and then rose up again, do-

ing the same thing the second and third time. After this, every one keeping his own place, the instruments of music began to play again, and the president of the tribunal of rights gave notice to the chief eunuch of the presence, that all the grandees of the empire besought his majesty to come and sit upon the throne. These words being carried to the Emperor, he appeared, and sat upon the throne. Immediately the two doctors of the first degree, that were appointed, advanced near the table, made several reverences upon their knees, and then rose up: one of them took the little book, and read with a loud, distinct voice, the compliment this august company made to his majesty. The reading of this compliment, which was not very long, being ended, and the doctors re-

tired to their places, the Emperor descended from the throne, and re-entered the inner part of the palace, followed by his nobles.

“After noon the princesses of the blood, the other princesses, and the ladies of the first quality, went to the palace, with the wives of the mandarins; every one according to their rank and dignity advanced towards the Empress’s palace: they were conducted by a lady of distinction, whose business it is on these occasions to be mistress of the ceremonies, no nobleman or mandarin daring to appear. As soon as the ladies were all arrived near the Empress’s palace, her first eunuch presented himself, when the mistress of the ceremonies addressed him in this manner—“I humbly beseech the Empress, in behalf of this

“assembly, to vouchsafe her presence,
“and place herself upon the throne.”
She came: the splendour of her dress
heightened the beauty of her counte-
nance, yet could they perceive a tinc-
ture of fearful agitation playing round
her features. They were greatly asto-
nished, and tenderly enquired the
cause. “I am terrified,” said she “lest
“the magnificence which this high
“station forces on me, should take
“too fast a hold on my weak mind,
“and cause me to neglect the duties
“which I am called on to perform.”

“Oh, no, dear lady,” replied the
smiling Nan-si, “you will never act
“unworthy of yourself: consult your
“heart, and that will always teach
“you what is right.” Si-ling thanked
the princess by taking her hand.
Nan-si gently forced her towards the

throne, and helped her to ascend. Si-ling raised her hands and eyes towards Chang-ti, and said—"Oh thou
" mysterious power, who hast so kindly
" guarded an helpless orphan from
" the sad moment of her birth even
" to this hour, deign to accept her
" public thanks, and listen to her
" prayer! Grant, oh thou wise dis-
" poser of events, that it may be my
" greatest pride to succour the dis-
" tressed, and comfort the afflicted,
" and that no evening may close in
" upon my future days, without my
" having strenuously endeavoured to
" perform some act worthy of thy
" great patronage; but, if thy search-
" ing eye perceives that I shall prove
" unworthy of the blessings thou art
" showering upon me, instantly snap
" short the thread of my existence;

“ even here, on this the seat of my
“ high exaltation, that, when my
“ story and my prayer shall be re-
“ lated, it may awe the arrogant,
“ and teach them to be humble in
“ prosperity.”

She then sunk upon her knees, and bowed her forehead to the earth: the ladies involuntarily did the same. She remained many minutes in this posture, and then arose, saying—“ I will
“ believe my prayer is heard, for I
“ am greatly comforted.” She seated herself upon the throne while the lady of the ceremonies read the compliment, and then retired into her palace, followed by the ladies, for whom a sumptuous banquet was prepared, and who were entertained by their new Empress with all that gaiety so natural to youthful innocence.

Before sun set the guests departed*, and the grand Colao requested to conduct Si-ling to the apartments of her husband. Never did monarch receive his Empress with such heart-felt rapture; never did bride receive the embraces of her newly-wedded lord with such affectionate emotion. The Colao too was much affected: he embraced and blessed them both, declaring that no act of his past life gave him such pure joy as that of placing Chun and Si-ling in a situation suited to their great abilities and superior virtue.

* "It is a singular custom in China, that, as soon as night has succeeded the departure of the sun, the city is a desert: not a passenger to be seen in the streets; all have retired to rest. Not an assembly, a ball, or an evening theatre is to be found. At the dawn of day every body is in motion, and the streets are instantly thronged."

“ Oh,” he continued, “ how blessed
 “ would be the state of man if he
 “ would cast off selfish views, and
 “ only study how to act aright.” Chun
 expressed sentiments of the liveliest
 gratitude, and said—“ I will be every
 “ thing you wish, save only one, and
 “ in that I pray you pardon me. Ne-
 “ ver can Chun, the husbandman, suffer
 “ himself to be called Emperor, whilst
 “ the great Yao lives! You are the
 “ son and brother of a monarch: your
 “ head is filled with wisdom, and your
 “ heart with virtue; and shall the lowly
 “ Chun presume to rank above you?
 “ Never! Call me your minister, or
 “ your lowliest servant, and I will
 “ obey; but never, never will I rank
 “ above you.”

Chun kept his resolution for several
 years, until the ill health of Yao made.

him consent to become associate in the empire. They lived together in perfect union for twenty-eight years, when Yao, perceiving himself near his end, exhorted Chun to govern like a father, and to remember that he was made for the people, and not the people for him; and that an Emperor was raised above the rest of mankind only to do them good, and to supply their wants: finishing these words, he gave to Chun the seals of the empire*, and drew his last breath at the great age of one hundred and eighteen years.

* “ One of the most considerable ensigus of the imperial authority is that of the seals of the empire, which are applied to authorise all public acts, and all the decisions of the tribunals. The Emperor’s seal is near eight inches square, and is of a very fine jasper, which is a precious stone, highly

Chun having paid his duty to the memory of Yao*, took possession of the imperial dignity, and received the homage of the tributary kings. He found in the royal palace a vast quantity of *yu*, esteemed in China, and none but the Emperor is allowed to use it. It is called *Yu-che*, and is taken out of the mountain *Yn-yu-chan*, that is, the mountain of the agate seal.

“The Chinese relate several fables concerning this mountain; and, among others, that formerly the *Fong-hoang* having appeared upon this mountain, rested upon an unhewn stone, and that a skilful lapidary having broken it in pieces, found this famous stone, of which the seal of the empire is made.

“The *fong-hoang* is a bird, the phoenix of China, or bird of prosperity.”

* “After the death of Yao, Chun shut himself up in his sepulchre for three years, from whence arose the custom of mourning three years for a parent.”

gold and jewels, of which he made a sphere, representing the seven planets, each planet represented by different jewels. He made also some new laws, and appointed inferior officers in each of the six courts established by his predecessor: he honoured men of learning with his favour and protection; visited his provinces once a year, and rewarded or punished the tributary kings with so much justice that he gained the esteem of all his people.

The improvement of agriculture was one of his principal concerns; and, that he might not be thought to have forgotten his low origin, he commenced every spring of his long life by ploughing a piece of land with his own hands*.

* "It is believed that this was the foundation of a great festival which is solemnized every year

The reverence he paid to old age caused a sensation of delight in all who witnessed it; and, so determined was he to deserve the affections of his subjects, that he caused to be performed in all the cities of China, on the day when the sun enters the fifteenth degree of the sign Aquarius, which the Chinese look upon as the beginning of spring. The Emperor goes himself in a solemn manner to plough a few ridges of land, with a design to animate the husbandmen by his own example in the cultivation of the earth. The mandarins of every city perform the same ceremony.

“ On this day, the governor, or chief mandarin, comes out of his palace, carried in a chair, preceded by flags and lighted torches, divers instruments playing at the same time: he is crowned with flowers, and proceeds in this equipage towards the eastern gate of the city, as it were to meet the spring. He is attended by several litters, painted and adorned with a variety of silk tapestry, on which are the figures and representations of illustrious persons who were addicted to husbandry; and also several histo-

people, that he ordered a large white marble table to be placed on the outside of his palace gate, on which his subjects were desired to write down

ries, relating to the same subject. The streets are covered with tapestry, and they erect, at proper distances, triumphal arches, on which they hang beautiful lanthorns, painted in transparency; they also make illuminations.

“Among the figures there is a cow, of potter’s clay, of such an enormous size, that forty men cannot carry it without difficulty. Behind the cow, whose horns are gilt, is a young child, with one foot naked and the other covered: they call it the genius of labour and diligence. The child strikes the cow without ceasing with a rod, as though it were to drive her forward. She is followed by all the husbandmen, with musical instruments: after them proceed companies of masquers and comedians, making several representations.

“In this manner they march to the governor’s palace, and strip the cow of all her ornaments, draw-

any fault they saw in him. The advancement of Chun is attributed to his obedience and submission to his parents; for, though they always used

ing out of her inside a prodigious number of small cows, made of clay, distributing them among the multitude: at the same time they break the cow in pieces, and distribute the fragments to the people; after which, the governor makes a short discourse, recommending the care of husbandry as a thing highly conducive to the public good.

“The attention of the Emperors and mandarins to the cultivation of land is so great, that when the deputies are sent to court from the viceroys, the Emperor never forgets to enquire in what condition the fields are; and frequently the falling of a seasonable shower is a sufficient occasion to visit a mandarin, and to compliment him thereupon.

“The Emperor orders the governors of the cities to give him information every year of that agriculturalist who is most remarkable in their districts, for application to husbandry, for an unblemished re-

him severely, and sometimes even to the endangering his life, yet it never altered his dutiful behaviour; so that, by degrees, his respect and patience got the better of their ill treatment, from whence their philosophers draw these two great principles of morality—first, that however wicked parents may be,

putation, for his care in preserving union in his own family, peace with his neighbours, and freedom from all extravagance. It is no unusual thing, upon the report of the governor, for the Emperor to raise this wise and diligent husbandman to the degree of mandarin of the eighth order. This distinction confers a right to wear the habit of a mandarin, to visit the governor of the city, to sit in his presence, and to drink tea with him: he is respected while he lives, and, after his death, he has funeral obsequies agreeably to his degree, and his title of honour is written in the hall of his ancestors. What occasion of joy is this to the venerable old man, and all his family!

children are not the less bound to pay them respect and obedience—secondly, that there is no man so wicked but his heart may be softened by kindness, and at last reclaimed from evil by a sense of repeated obligations.

Chun continued to treat his parents and his brothers with great respect and tenderness; but, knowing they were not worthy to fill any place about the court, he gave them none. Their company, however, was sought by people of the first rank, and the pleasure which they experienced in talking of my son the Emperor, or my brother the Emperor, was sufficiently gratifying to their narrow hearts.

Chun and Si-ling appropriated Ki-ang-tse's riches to the building of an hospital for foundlings; and, following the precepts of the munificent Yao,

they made their subjects' happiness the business and the pleasure of their long lives*, and, in the bosom of their lovely family, found a felicity which is rarely the lot of mortals; and left an example which even the great Confucius thought worthy of imitation, an example which has retained its lustre more than four thousand years.

* Chun was 110 years old when he died.

FINIS.

12/11/1927

a Birthday Gift

by A. Karassens

12/1/192



